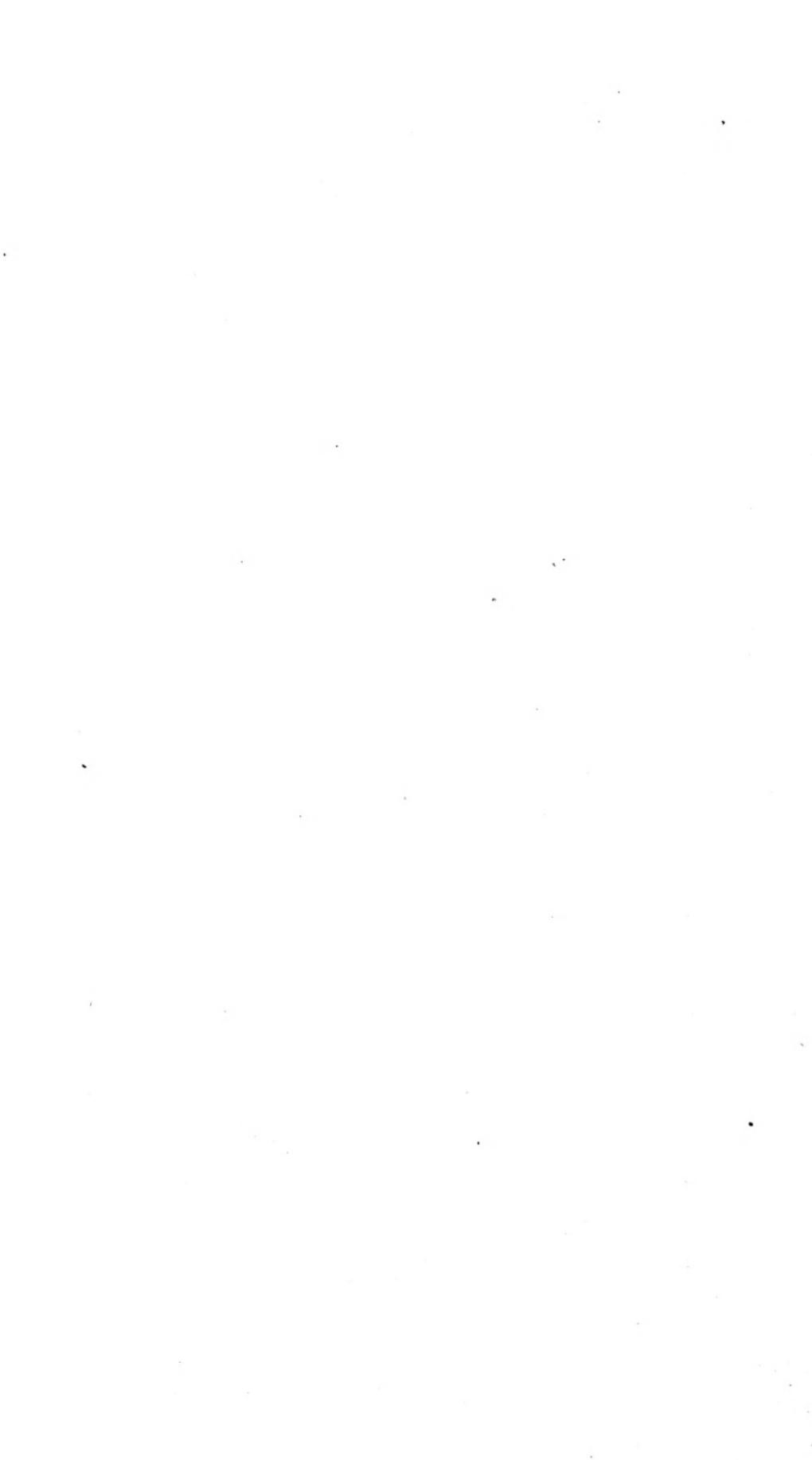


Elizabeth Bell?





LECTURES

ON

RHETORIC

AND

BELLES LETTRES,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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LECTURE XVIII.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE—GENERAL CHARACTERS OF
STYLE—DIFFUSE, CONCISE—FEEBLE, NERVOUS—
DRY, PLAIN, NEAT, ELEGANT, FLOWERY.

HAVING treated, at considerable length, of the figures of speech, of their origin, of their nature, and of the management of such of them as are important enough to require a particular discussion, before finally dismissing this subject I think it incumbent on me to make some observations concerning the proper use of figurative language in general. These, indeed, I have in part already anticipated. But, as great errors are often committed in this part of style, especially by young writers, it may be of use that I bring together, under one view, the most material directions on this head.

I begin with repeating an observation, formerly made, that neither all the beauties, nor even the chief beauties of composition, depend upon tropes and figures. Some of the most sublime and most

pathetic passages of the most admired authors, both in prose and poetry, are expressed in the most simple style, without any figure at all ; instances of which I have before given. On the other hand, a composition may abound with these studied ornaments ; the language may be artful, splendid, and highly figured, and yet the composition be on the whole frigid and unaffectionate. Not to speak of sentiment and thought, which constitute the real and lasting merit of any work, if the style be stiff and affected, if it be deficient in perspicuity or precision, or in ease and neatness, all the figures that can be employed will never render it agreeable : they may dazzle a vulgar, but will never please a judicious eye.

In the second place, figures, in order to be beautiful, must always rise naturally from the subject. I have shewn that all of them are the language either of imagination, or of passion ; some of them suggested by imagination, when it is awakened and sprightly, such as metaphors and comparisons ; others by passion or more heated emotion, such as personifications and apostrophes. Of course they are beautiful then only, when they are prompted by fancy, or by passion. They must rise of their own accord ; they must flow from a mind warmed by the object which it seeks to describe ; we should never interrupt the course of thought to cast about for figures. If they be sought after coolly, and fastened on as designed or-

naments, they will have a miserable effect. It is a very erroneous idea, which many have of the ornaments of style, as if they were things detached from the subject, and that could be stuck to it like lace upon a coat : this is indeed,

Purpureus late qui splendeat unus aut alter

Assuitur pannus * —————

ARS POET.

And it is this false idea which has often brought attention to the beauties of writing into disrepute. Whereas, the real and proper ornaments of style arise from sentiment. They flow in the same stream with the current of thought. A writer of genius conceives his subject strongly ; his imagination is filled and impressed with it ; and pours itself forth in that figurative language which imagination naturally speaks. He puts on no emotion which his subject does not raise in him : he speaks as he feels ; but his style will be beautiful, because his feelings are lively. On occasions, when fancy is languid, or finds nothing to rouse it, we should never attempt to hunt for figures. We then work, as it is said, “*invita Minerva* ;” supposing figures invented, they will have the appearance of being forced ; and in this case, they had much better be omitted.

In the third place, even when imagination prompts, and the subject naturally gives rise to

* “ Shreds of purple with broad lustre shine,
“ Sew’d on your poem.”

FRANCIS.

figures, they must, however, not be employed too frequently. In all beauty, “ simplex munditiis” is a capital quality. Nothing derogates more from the weight and dignity of any composition, than too great attention to ornament. When the ornaments cost labour, that labour always appears ; though they should cost us none, still the reader or hearer may be surfeited with them ; and when they come too thick, they give the impression of a light and frothy genius, that evaporates in show, rather than brings forth what is solid. The directions of the ancient critics on this head are full of good sense, and deserve careful attention. “ Voluptatibus maximis,” says Cicero de Orat. I. iii. “ fastidium finitimum est in rebus omnibus, “ quo hoc minus in oratione miremur. In qua vel “ ex poetis, vel oratoribus possumus judicare, con-“ cinnam, ornatam, festivam sine intermissione, “ quamvis claris sit coloribus picta, vel poesis, vel “ oratio, non posse in delectatione esse diurna. “ Quare, bene et praeclare, quamvis nobis saepe di-“ catur, belle et festive nimium saepe nolo*.” To

* “ In all human things, disgust borders so nearly on the
“ most lively pleasures, that we need not be surprised to find this
“ hold in eloquence. From reading either poets or orators we
“ may easily satisfy ourselves, that neither a poem nor an ora-
“ tion, which, without intermission, is showy and sparkling,
“ can please us long. Wherefore, though we may wish for
“ the frequent praise of having expressed ourselves well and
“ properly, we should not covet repeated applause for being
“ bright and splendid.”

the same purpose, are the excellent directions with which Quintilian concludes his discourse concerning figures, l. ix. c. 3. “Ego illud de iis figuris quæ veræ fiunt, adjiciam breviter, sicut ornant orationem opportunæ positæ, ita ineptissimas esse cum immodice petuntur. Sunt, qui neglecto rerum pondere et viribus sententiarum, si vel inania verba in hos modos depravunt, summos se judicant artifices; ideoque non desinunt eas nectere; quas sine sententia sectare, tam est ridiculum quam querere habet tum gestumque sine corpore. Ne hæ quidem quæ rectæ fiunt, densandæ sunt nimis. Scient dum imprimis quid quisque postulet locus, quid persona, quid tempus. Major enim pars harum figurarum posita est in delectatione. Ubi vero atrocitate, invidia, miseratione pugnandum est, quis ferat verbis contrapositis, et consimilibus et pariter cadentibus, irascentem, flantem, rogantem? Cum in his rebus, cura verborum derogaret affectibus fidem; et ubicunque ars ostentatur, veritas abesse videatur *.” After these

* “ I must add concerning those figures which are proper, in themselves, that, as they beautify a composition when they are seasonably introduced, so they deform it greatly if too frequently sought after. There are some, who, neglecting strength of sentiment and weight of matter, if they can only force their empty words into a figurative style, imagine themselves great writers; and therefore continually string together such ornaments; which is just as ridiculous, where there is no sentiment to support them, as to contrive gestures and

judicious and useful observations, I have no more to add on this subject, except this admonition,

In the fourth place, that without a genius for figurative language, none should attempt it. Imagination is a power not to be acquired ; it must be derived from nature. Its redundancies we may prune, its deviations we may correct, its sphere we may enlarge, but the faculty itself we cannot create ; and all efforts towards a metaphorical ornamented style, if we are destitute of the proper genius for it, will prove awkward and disgusting. Let us satisfy ourselves, however, by considering that without this talent, or at least with a very small measure of it, we may both write and speak to advantage. Good sense, clear ideas, perspicuity of language, and proper arrangement of words and thoughts, will always command attention. These are, indeed, the foundations of all solid merit both in speaking and writing. Many subjects require

“ dresses for what wants a body. Even those figures which a
“ subject admits, must not come too thick. We must begin
“ with considering what the occasion, the time, and the person
“ who speaks, render proper. For the object aimed at by the
“ greater part of these figures is entertainment. But when the
“ subject becomes deeply serious, and strong passions are to be
“ moved, who can hear the orator, who, in affecting language
“ and balanced phrases, endeavours to express wrath, commis-
“ ration, or earnest entreaty? On all such occasions, a solicitous
“ attention to words weakens passion ; and when so much art
“ is shewn, there is suspected to be little sincerity.”

nothing more : and those which admit of ornament, admit it only as a secondary requisite. To study and to know our own genius well ; to follow nature ; to seek to improve, but not to force it ; are directions which cannot be too often given to those who desire to excel in the liberal arts.

When I entered on the consideration of style, I observed that words being the copies of our ideas, there must always be a very intimate connection between the manner in which every writer employs words and his manner of thinking ; and that, from the peculiarity of thought and expression which belongs to him, there is a certain character imprinted on his style, which may be denominated his manner ; commonly expressed by such general terms, as strong, weak, dry, simple, affected, or the like. These distinctions carry, in general, some reference to an author's manner of thinking, but refer chiefly to his mode of expression. They arise from the whole tenour of his language ; and comprehend the effect produced by all those parts of style which we have already considered ; the choice which he makes of single words ; his arrangement of these in sentences ; the degree of his precision ; and his embellishment by means of musical cadence, figures, or other arts of speech. Of such general characters of style, therefore, it remains now to speak, as the result of those underparts of which I have hitherto treated.

That different subjects require to be treated of in different sorts of style, is a position so obvious, that I shall not stay to illustrate it. Every one sees that treatises of philosophy, for instance, ought not to be composed in the same style with orations. Every one sees also, that different parts of the same composition require a variation in the style and manner. In a sermon, for instance, or any harangue, the application or peroration admits more ornament, and requires more warmth, than the didactic part. But what I mean at present to remark is, that, amidst this variety, we still expect to find, in the compositions of any one man, some degree of uniformity or consistency with himself in manner; we expect to find some predominant character of style impressed on all his writings, which shall be suited to, and shall mark his particular genius and turn of mind. The orations in Livy differ much in style, as they ought to do, from the rest of his history. The same is the case with those in Tacitus. Yet both in Livy's orations, and in those of Tacitus, we are able clearly to trace the distinguishing manner of each historian; the magnificent fulness of the one, and the sententious conciseness of the other. The "Lettres Persanes," and "L'Esprit de Loix," are the works of the same author. They required very different composition surely, and accordingly they differ widely; yet still we see the same hand. Wherever there is real and native genius, it gives a determination to one kind of style rather than

another. Where nothing of this appears ; where there is no marked nor peculiar character in the compositions of any author, we are apt to infer, not without reason, that he is a vulgar and trivial author, who writes from imitation, and not from the impulse of original genius. As the most celebrated painters are known by their hand, so the best and most original writers are known and distinguished, throughout all their works, by their style and peculiar manner. This will be found to hold almost without exception.

The ancient critics attended to these general characters of style which we are now to consider. Dionysius of Halicarnassus divides them into three kinds, and calls them the austere, the florid, and the middle. By the austere he means a style distinguished for strength and firmness, with a neglect of smoothness and ornament ; for examples of which, he gives Pindar and Æschylus among the poets, and Thueydides among the prose writers. By the florid, he means, as the name indicates, a style ornamented, flowing, and sweet, resting more upon numbers and grace, than strength ; he instances Hesiod, Sappho, Anacreon, Euripides, and principally Isocrates. The middle kind is the just mean between these, and comprehends the beauties of both ; in which class he places Homer and Sophocles among the poets ; in prose, Herodotus, Demosthenes, Plato, and (what seems strange) Aristotle. This must be a very wide class indeed,

which comprehends Plato and Aristotle under one article as to style *. Cicero and Quintilian make also a threefold division of style, though with respect to different qualities of it, in which they are followed by most of the modern writers on rhetoric ; the *Simplex*, *Tenuer*, or *Subtile* ; the *Grave* or *Vehemens* ; and the *Medium*, or *Temperatum genus dicendi..* But these divisions, and the illustrations they give of them, are so loose and general, that they cannot advance us much in our ideas of style. I shall endeavour to be a little more particular in what I have to say on this subject.

One of the first and most obvious distinctions of the different kinds of style, is what arises from an author's spreading out his thoughts more or less. This distinction forms, what are called the diffuse and the concise styles. A concise writer compresses his thoughts into the fewest possible words ; he seeks to employ none but such as are most expressive ; he lops off, as redundant, every expression which does not add something material to the sense. Ornament he does not reject ; he may be lively and figured ; but his ornament is intended for the sake of force, rather than grace. He never gives you the same thought twice. He places it in the light which appears to him the most striking ; but if you do not apprehend it well in that light, you need not expect to find it in

* De Compositione Verborum, cap. 25.

any other. His sentences are arranged with compactness and strength, rather than with cadence and harmony. The utmost precision is studied in them ; and they are commonly designed to suggest more to the reader's imagination than they directly express.

A diffuse writer unfolds his thought fully. He places it in a variety of lights, and gives the reader every possible assistance for understanding it completely. He is not very careful to express it at first in its full strength ; because he is to repeat the impression ; and what he wants in strength, he proposes to supply by copiousness. Writers of this character generally love magnificence and amplification. Their periods naturally run out into some length ; and having room for ornament of every kind, they admit it freely.

Each of these manners has its peculiar advantages : and each becomes faulty when carried to the extreme. The extreme of conciseness becomes abrupt and obscure; it is apt also to lead into a style too pointed, and bordering on the epigrammatic. The extreme of diffuseness becomes weak and languid, and tires the reader. However, to one or other of these two manners, a writer may lean according as his genius prompts him ; and under the general character of a concise, or of a more open and diffuse style, may possess much beauty in his composition.

For illustrations of these general characters, I can only refer to the writers who are examples of them. It is not so much from detached passages, such as I was wont formerly to quote for instances, as from the current of an author's style, that we are to collect the idea of a formed manner of writing. The two most remarkable examples that I know, of conciseness carried as far as propriety will allow, perhaps in some cases farther, are Tacitus the historian, and the President Montesquieu in "L'Esprit " de Loix." Aristotle too holds an eminent rank among didactic writers for his brevity. Perhaps no writer in the world was ever so frugal of his words as Aristotle; but this frugality of expression frequently darkens his meaning. Of a beautiful and magnificent diffuseness, Cicero is, beyond doubt, the most illustrious instance that can be given. Addison also, and Sir William Temple, come in some degree under this class.

In judging when it is proper to lean to the concise, and when to the diffuse manner, we must be directed by the nature of the composition. Discourses that are to be spoken, require a more copious style than books that are to read. When the whole meaning must be catched from the mouth of the speaker, without the advantage which books afford of pausing at pleasure, and reviewing what appears obscure, great conciseness is always to be avoided. We should never presume too much on the quickness of our hearer's understanding;

but our style ought to be such, that the bulk of men can go along with us easily, and without effort. A flowing copious style, therefore, is required in all public speakers; guarding, at the same time, against such a degree of diffusion as renders them languid and tiresome; which will always prove the case, when they inculcate too much, and present the same thought under too many different views.

In written compositions, a certain degree of conciseness possesses great advantages. It is more lively; keeps up attention; makes a brisker and stronger impression; and gratifies the mind by supplying more exercise to a reader's own thought. A sentiment which, expressed diffusely, will barely be admitted to be just, expressed concisely, will be admired as spirited. Description, when we want to have it vivid and animated, should be in a concise strain. This is different from the common opinion; most persons being ready to suppose, that upon description a writer may dwell more safely than upon other things, and that by a full and extended style, it is rendered more rich and expressive. I apprehend, on the contrary, that a diffuse manner generally weakens it. Any redundant words or circumstances encumber the fancy, and make the object we present to it appear confused and indistinct. Accordingly, the most masterly describers, Homer, Tacitus, Milton, are almost always concise in their descriptions. They shew

us more of an object at one glance, than a feeble diffuse writer can shew, by turning it round and round in a variety of lights. The strength and vivacity of description, whether in prose or poetry, depend much more upon the happy choice of one or two striking circumstances, than upon the multiplication of them.

Addresses to the passions, likewise, ought to be in the concise, rather than the diffuse manner. In these, it is dangerous to be diffuse, because it is very difficult to support proper warmth for any length of time. When we become prolix, we are always in hazard of cooling the reader. The heart, too, and the fancy, run fast; and if once we can put them in motion, they supply many particulars to greater advantage than an author can display them. The case is different when we address ourselves to the understanding; as in all matters of reasoning, explication and instruction. There I would prefer a more free and diffuse manner. When you are to strike the fancy, or to move the heart, be concise; when you are to inform the understanding, which moves more slowly, and requires the assistance of a guide, it is better to be full. Historical narration may be beautiful, either in a concise or a diffuse manner, according to the writer's genius. Livy and Herodotus are diffuse; Thucydides and Sallust are succinct; yet all of them are agreeable.

I observed that a diffuse style generally abounds in long periods ; and a concise writer, it is certain, will often employ short sentences. It is not, however, to be inferred from this, that long or short sentences are fully characteristical of the one or the other manner. It is very possible for one to compose always in short sentences, and to be withal extremely diffuse, if a small measure of sentiment be spread through many of these sentences. Seneca is a remarkable example. By the shortness and quaintness of his sentences, he may appear at first view very concise ; yet he is far from being so. He transfigures the same thought into many different forms. He makes it pass for a new one only by giving it a new turn. So also, most of the French writers compose in short sentences ; though their style, in general, is not concise ; commonly less so than the bulk of English writers, whose sentences are much longer. A French author breaks down into two or three sentences, that portion of thought which an English author crowds into one. The direct effect of short sentences, is to render the style brisk and lively, but not always concise. By the quick successive impulses which they make on the mind, they keep it awake ; and give to composition more of a spirited character. Long periods, like Lord Clarendon's, are grave and stately ; but like all grave things, they are in hazard of becoming dull. An intermixture of both long and short ones is

requisite, when we would support solemnity, together with vivacity, leaning more to the one or the other, according as propriety requires that the solemn or the sprightly should be predominant in our composition. But of long and short sentences, I had occasion, formerly, to treat, under the head of the construction of periods.

The nervous and the feeble are generally held to be characters of style, of the same import with the concise and the diffuse. They do indeed very often coincide. Diffuse writers have, for the most part, some degree of feebleness; and nervous writers will generally be inclined to a concise expression. This, however, does not always hold; and there are instances of writers, who, in the midst of a full and ample style, have maintained a great degree of strength. Livy is an example; and in the English language, Dr Barrow. Barrow's style has many faults. It is unequal, incorrect, and redundant; but withal, for force and expressiveness, uncommonly distinguished. On every subject, he multiplies words with an overflowing copiousness; but it is always a torrent of strong ideas and significant expressions which he pours forth. Indeed the foundations of a nervous or a weak style are laid in an author's manner of thinking. If he conceives an object strongly, he will express it with energy; but if he has only an indistinct view of his subject; if his ideas be loose

and wavering; if his genius be such, or, at the time of his writing, so carelessly exerted, that he has no firm hold of the conception which he would communicate to us, the marks of all this will clearly appear in his style. Several unmeaning words and loose epithets will be found; his expressions will be vague and general: his arrangement indistinct and feeble; we shall conceive somewhat of his meaning, but our conception will be faint. Whereas a nervous writer, whether he employs an extended or a concise style, gives us always a strong impression of his meaning; his mind is full of his subject, and his words are all expressive; every phrase and every figure which he uses, tends to render the picture which he would set before us, more lively and complete.

I observed under the head of diffuse and concise style, that an author might lean either to the one or to the other, and yet be beautiful. This is not the case with respect to the nervous and the feeble. Every author, in every composition, ought to study to express himself with some strength; and in proportion as he approaches to the feeble, he becomes a bad writer. In all kinds of writing, however, the same degree of strength is not demanded. But the more grave and weighty any composition is, the more should a character of strength predominate in the style. Hence in history, philosophy, and solemn discourses, it is ex-

pected most. One of the most complete models of a nervous style, is Demosthenes in his orations.

As every good quality in style has an extreme, when pursued to which it becomes faulty, this holds of the nervous style as well as others. Too great a study of strength, to the neglect of the other qualities of style, is found to betray writers into a harsh manner. Harshness arises from unusual words, from forced inversions in the construction of a sentence, and too much neglect of smoothness and ease. This is reckoned the fault of some of our earliest classics in the English language, such as Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Francis Bacon, Hooker, Chillingworth, Milton in his prose works, Harrington, Cudworth, and other writers of considerable note in the days of Queen Elizabeth, James I. and Charles I. These writers had nerves and strength in a high degree, and are to this day eminent for that quality in style. But the language in their hands was exceedingly different from what it is now, and was indeed entirely formed upon the idiom and construction of the Latin in the arrangement of sentences. Hooker, for instance, begins the preface to his celebrated work of Ecclesiastical Polity, with the following sentence : “ Though “ for no other cause, yet for this, that posterity “ may know we have not loosely, through silence, “ permitted things to pass away as in dream, there “ shall be, for men’s information, extant this “ much concerning the present state of the church

“ of God established amongst us, and their careful endeavours which would have upheld the same.” Such a sentence now sounds harsh in our ears. Yet some advantages certainly attended this sort of style; and whether we have gained, or lost, upon the whole, by departing from it, may bear a question. By the freedom of arrangement, which it permitted, it rendered the language susceptible of more strength, of more variety of collocation, and more harmony of period. But however this be, such a style is now obsolete ; and no modern writer could adopt it without the censure of harshness and affectation. The present form which the language has assumed, has, in some measure, sacrificed the study of strength to that of perspicuity and ease. Our arrangement of words has become less forcible, perhaps, but more plain and natural ; and this is now understood to be the genius of our language.

The restoration of King Charles II. seems to be the era of the foundation of our present style. Lord Clarendon was one of the first who laid aside those frequent inversions which prevailed among writers of the former age. After him, Sir William Temple polished the language still more. But the author who, by the number and reputation of his works, formed it more than any one, into its present state, is Dryden. Dryden began to write at the Restoration, and continued long an author both in poetry and prose. He had made the language his study ; and though he wrote hastily, and often

incorrectly, and his style is not free from faults, yet there is a richness in his diction, a copiousness, ease, and variety in his expression, which has not been surpassed by any who have come after him *. Since his time, considerable attention has been paid to purity and elegance of style ; but it is elegance rather than strength, that forms the distinguishing quality of most of the good English writers. Some of them compose in a more manly and nervous manner than others ; but, whether it be from the genius of our language, or from whatever other cause, it appears to me, that we are far from the strength of several of the Greek and Roman authors.

Hitherto we have considered style under those characters that respect its expressiveness of an author's meaning. Let us now proceed to consider it in another view, with respect to the degree of ornament employed to beautify it. Here, the style of different authors seems to rise in the following

* Dr Johnson, in his life of Dryden, gives the following character of his prose style : " His prefaces have not the formality of a settled style, in which the first half of the sentence betrays the other. The clauses are never balanced, nor the periods modelled ; every word seems to drop by chance though it falls into its proper place. Nothing is cold or languid ; the whole is airy, animated, and vigorous ; what is little, is gay ; what is great, is splendid. Though all is easy, nothing is feeble ; though all seems careless, there is nothing harsh ; and though, since his earlier works more than a century has passed, they have nothing yet uncouth or obsolete."

gradation; a dry, a plain, a neat, an elegant, a flowery manner. Of each of these in their order.

First, a dry manner. This excludes all ornament of every kind. Content with being understood, it has not the least aim to please either the fancy or the ear. This is tolerable only in pure didactic writing; and even there to make us bear it, great weight and solidity of matter is requisite; and entire perspicuity of language. Aristotle is the complete example of a dry style. Never, perhaps, was there any author who adhered so rigidly to the strictness of a didactic manner throughout all his writings, and conveyed so much instruction, without the least approach to ornament. With the most profound genius and extensive views, he writes like a pure intelligence, who addresses himself solely to the understanding, without making any use of the channel of the imagination. But this is a manner which deserves not to be imitated. For, although the goodness of the matter may compensate the dryness or harshness of the style, yet is that dryness a considerable defect; as it fatigues attention, and conveys our sentiments, with disadvantage, to the reader or hearer.

A plain style rises one degree above a dry one. A writer of this character employs very little ornament of any kind, and rests almost entirely upon his sense. But, if he is at no pains to engage us by the employment of figures, musical arrange-

ment, or any other art of writing, he studies, however, to avoid disgusting us like a dry and a harsh writer. Besides perspicuity, he pursues propriety, purity, and precision, in his language; which forms one degree, and no inconsiderable one, of beauty. Liveliness too, and force, may be consistent with a very plain style: and therefore, such an author, if his sentiments be good, may be abundantly agreeable. The difference between a dry and plain writer is, that the former is incapable of ornament, and seems not to know what it is; the latter seeks not after it. He gives us his meaning in good language, distinct and pure; any further ornament he gives himself no trouble about; either, because he thinks it unnecessary to his subject; or, because his genius does not lead him to delight in it; or, because it leads him to despise it*.

This last was the case with Dean Swift, who may be placed at the head of those that have employed the plain style. Few writers have discovered more capacity. He treats every subject which he handles, whether serious or ludicrous, in

* “ On this head, of the general characters of style, particularly the plain and the simple, and the characters of those English authors who are classed under them, in this and the following Lecture, several ideas have been taken from a manuscript treatise on rhetoric, part of which was shewn to me many years ago, by the learned and ingenious author, Dr Adam Smith; and which, it is hoped, will be given by him to the public.

a masterly manner. He knew, almost beyond any man, the purity, the extent, the precision of the English language ; and therefore, to such as wish to attain a pure and correct style, he is one of the most useful models. But we must not look for much ornament and grace in his language. His haughty and morose genius made him despise any embellishment of this kind as beneath his dignity. He delivers his sentiments in a plain down-right positive manner, like one who is sure he is in the right ; and is very indifferent whether you be pleased or not. His sentences are commonly negligently arranged ; distinctly enough as to the sense ; but without any regard to smoothness of sound ; often without much regard to compactness or elegance. If a metaphor, or any other figure, chanced to render his satire more poignant, he would, perhaps, vouchsafe to adopt it, when it came in his way ; but if it tended only to embellish and illustrate, he would rather throw it aside. Hence, in his serious pieces, his style often borders upon the dry and unpleasing ; in his humorous ones, the plainness of his manner sets off his wit to the highest advantage. There is no froth, nor affectation in it ; it seems native and unstudied ; and while he hardly appears to smile himself, he makes his reader laugh heartily. To a writer of such a genius as Dean Swift, the plain style was most admirably fitted. Among our philosophical writers, Mr Locke comes under this class ; perspicuous and pure, but almost without any orna-

ment whatever. In works which admit, or require, ever so much ornament, there are parts where the plain manner ought to predominate. But we must remember, that when this is the character which a writer affects throughout his whole composition, great weight of matter, and great force of sentiment, are required, in order to keep up the reader's attention, and prevent him from becoming tired of the author.

What is called a neat style comes next in order; and here we are got into the region of ornament; but that ornament not of the highest or most sparkling kind. A writer of this character shews that he does not despise the beauty of language. It is an object of his attention. But his attention is shewn in the choice of words, and in a graceful collocation of them, rather than in any high efforts of imagination or eloquence. His sentences are always clean, and free from the incumbrance of superfluous words; of a moderate length; rather inclining to brevity, than a swelling structure; closing with propriety; without any tails, or adjections dragging after the proper close. His cadence is varied; but not of the studied musical kind. His figures, if he uses any, are short and correct, rather than bold and glowing. Such a style as this may be attained by a writer who has no great powers of fancy or genius; by industry merely, and careful attention to the rules of writing, and it is a style always agreeable. It im-

prints a character of moderate elevation on our composition, and carries a decent degree of ornament, which is not unsuitable to any subject whatever. A familiar letter, or a law paper, on the driest subject, may be written with neatness; and a sermon, or a philosophical treatise, in a neat style, will be read with pleasure.

An elegant style is a character expressing a higher degree of ornament than a neat one; and, indeed, is the term usually applied to style, when possessing all the virtues of ornament, without any of its excesses or defects. From what has been formerly delivered, it will easily be understood, that complete elegance implies great perspicuity and propriety; purity in the choice of words, and care and dexterity in their harmonious and happy arrangement. It implies, farther, the grace and beauty of imagination spread over style, as far as the subject admits it; and all the illustration which figurative language adds, when properly employed. In a word, an elegant writer is one who pleases the fancy and the ear, while he informs the understanding; and who gives us his ideas clothed with all the beauty of expression, but not overcharged with any of its misplaced finery. In this class, therefore, we place only the first-rate writers in the language; such as Addison, Dryden, Pope, Temple, Bolingbroke, Atterbury, and a few more: writers who differ widely from one another in many of the attributes of style, but whom we now

class together, under the denomination of elegant, as in the scale of ornament possessing nearly the same place.

When the ornaments, applied to style, are too rich and gaudy in proportion to the subject; when they return upon us too fast, and strike us either with a dazzling lustre, or a false brilliancy, this forms what is called a florid style ; a term commonly used to signify the excess of ornament. In a young composer this is very pardonable. Perhaps, it is even a promising symptom in young people, that their style should incline to the florid and luxuriant : “ *Volo se efferat in adolescenti fæcunditas,*” says Quintilian ; “ *multum inde decorent anni, multum ratio limabit, aliquid velut usu ipso deteretur ; sit modo unde excidi possit quid et eluscipi.*—*Audeat hæc ætas plura, et inveniat et inventis gaudeat ; sint licet illa non satis interim sicca et severa.* Facile remedium est ubertatis : *sterilia nullo labore vincuntur.* * ” But, although the florid style may be allowed to

* “ In youth, I wish to see luxuriancy of fancy appear. Much of it will be diminished by years ; much will be corrected by ripening judgment ; some of it, by the mere practice of composition, will be worn away. Let there be only sufficient matter, at first, that can bear some pruning and lopping off. At this time of life, let genius be bold and inventive, and pride itself in its efforts, though these should not, as yet, be correct. Luxuriancy can easily be cured ; but for barrenness there is no remedy.”

youth, in their first essays, it must not receive the same indulgence from writers of maturer years. It is to be expected, that judgment, as it ripens, should chasten imagination, and reject, as juvenile, all such ornaments as are redundant, unsuitable to the subject, or not conducive to illustrate it. Nothing can be more contemptible than that tinsel splendour of language, which some writers perpetually affect. It were well, if this could be ascribed to the real overflowing of a rich imagination. We should then have something to amuse us, at least, if we found little to instruct us. But the worst is, that with those frothy writers, it is a luxuriancy of words, not of fancy. We see a laboured attempt to rise to a splendour of composition, of which they have formed to themselves some loose idea ; but having no strength of genius for attaining it, they endeavour to supply the defect by poetical words, by cold exclamations, by common-place figures, and every thing that has the appearance of pomp and magnificence. It has escaped these writers, that sobriety in ornament is one great secret for rendering it pleasing ; and that, without a foundation of good sense and solid thought, the most florid style is but a childish imposition on the public. The public, however, are but too apt to be so imposed on ; at least the mob of readers, who are very ready to be caught, at first, with whatever is dazzling and gaudy.

I cannot help thinking, that it reflects more honour on the religious turn, and good dispositions

of the present age, than on the public taste, that Mr Hervey's Meditations have had so great a currency. The pious and benevolent heart, which is always displayed in them, and the lively fancy, which, on some occasions, appears, justly merited applause: but the perpetual glitter of expression, the swoln imagery, and strained description which abound in them, are ornaments of a false kind. I would therefore advise students of oratory to imitate Mr Hervey's piety, rather than his style; and, in all compositions of a serious kind, to turn their attention, as Mr Pope says, "from sounds " to things, from fancy to the heart." Admonitions of this kind I have already had occasion to give, and may hereafter repeat them; as I conceive nothing more incumbent on me, in this course of lectures, than to take every opportunity of cautioning my readers against the affected and frivolous use of ornament; and, instead of that slight and superficial taste in writing, which I apprehend to be at present too fashionable, to introduce, as far as my endeavours can avail, a taste for more solid thought, and more manly simplicity in style.

LECTURE XIX.

GENERAL CHARACTERS OF STYLE—SIMPLE, AFFECTED, VEHEMENT—DIRECTIONS FOR FORMING A PROPER STYLE.

HAVING entered, in the last Lecture, on the consideration of the general characters of style, I treated of the concise and diffuse, the nervous and feeble manner. I considered style also, with relation to the different degrees of ornament, employed to beautify it ; in which view, the manner of different authors rises according to the following gradation : dry, plain, neat, elegant, flowery.

I am next to treat of style under another character, one of great importance in writing, and which requires to be accurately examined ; that of simplicity, or a natural style, as distinguished from affectation. Simplicity, applied to writing, is a term very frequently used ; but like many other critical terms, often used loosely and without precision. This has been owing chiefly to the different meanings given to the word simplicity, which,

therefore, it will be necessary here to distinguish, and to shew in what sense it is a proper attribute of style. We may remark four different acceptations in which it is taken.

The first is, simplicity of composition, as opposed to too great a variety of parts. Horace's precept refers to this;

Denique sit quod vis simplex duntaxat et unum *.

This is the simplicity of plan in a tragedy, as distinguished from double plots, and crowded incidents; the simplicity of the Iliad, or *Æneid*, in opposition to the digressions of Lucan, and the scattered tales of Ariosto; the simplicity of Grecian architecture, in opposition to the irregular variety of the Gothic. In this sense, simplicity is the same with unity.

The second sense is, simplicity of thought, as opposed to refinement. Simple thoughts are what arise naturally; what the occasion or the subject suggest unsought; and what, when once suggested, are easily apprehended by all. Refinement in writing, expresses a less natural and obvious train of thought, and which it required a peculiar turn of

* “ Then learn the wand’ring humour to controul,
“ And keep one equal tenour through the whole.”

genius to pursue: within certain bounds very beautiful; but when carried too far, approaching to intricacy, and hurting us by the appearance of being *recherché*, or far-sought. Thus, we would naturally say, that Mr Parnell is a poet of far greater simplicity, in his turn of thought, than Mr Cowley; Cicero's thoughts on moral subjects are natural; Seneca's too refined and laboured. In these two senses of simplicity, when it is opposed, either to variety of parts, or to refinement of thought, it has no proper relation to style.

There is a third sense of simplicity, in which it has respect to style; and stands opposed to too much ornament, or pomp of language; as when we say Mr Locke is a simple, Mr Hervey a florid writer; and it is in this sense, that the “*simplex*,” the “*tenue*,” or “*subtile genus dicendi*,” is understood by Cicero and Quintilian. The simple style in this sense, coincides with the plain or the neat style, which I before mentioned; and, therefore, requires no farther illustration.

But there is a fourth sense of simplicity, also respecting style; but not respecting the degree of ornament employed, so much as the easy and natural manner in which our language expresses our thoughts. This is quite different from the former sense of the word just now mentioned, in which simplicity was equivalent to plainness; whereas, in this sense, it is compatible with the highest or-

nament. Homer, for instance, possesses this simplicity in the greatest perfection; and yet no writer has more ornament and beauty. This simplicity, which is what we are now to consider, stands opposed, not to ornament, but to affectation of ornament, or appearance of labour about our style; and it is a distinguishing excellency in writing.

A writer of simplicity expresses himself in such a manner, that every one thinks he could have written in the same way; Horace describes it,

—ut sibi quivis
Speret idem, sudet multum, frustraque laboret
Ausus idem *.

There are no marks of art in his expression; it seems the very language of nature; you see in the style, not the writer and his labour, but the man in his own natural character. He may be rich in his expression; he may be full of figures, and of fancy; but these flow from him without effort; and he appears to write in this manner, not because he has studied it, but because it is the manner of expression most natural to him. A certain degree of negligence, also, is not inconsistent with this character of style, and even not ungraceful in it; for too

* “ From well-known tales such fictions would I raise,
“ As all might hope to imitate with ease;
“ Yet, while they strive the same success to gain,
“ Should find their labours and their hopes in vain.”

minute an attention to words is foreign to it : “ *Habeat ille,*” says Cicero, (*Orat.* No. 77.) “ *molle quiddam, et quod indice non ingratam* “ *negligentiam hominis, de re magis quam de* “ *verbo laborantis* *.” This is the great advantage of simplicity of style, that, like simplicity of manners, it shews us a man’s sentiments and turn of mind laid open without disguise. More studied and artificial manners of writing, however beautiful, have always this disadvantage, that they exhibit an author in form, like a man at court, where the splendour of dress, and the ceremonial of behaviour, conceal those peculiarities which distinguish one man from another. But reading an author of simplicity, is like conversing with a person of distinction at home, and with ease, where we find natural manners, and a marked character.

The highest degree of this simplicity is expressed by a French term, to which we have none that fully answers in our language, *naiveté*. It is not easy to give a precise idea of the import of this word. It always expresses a discovery of character. I believe the best account of it is given by a French critic, M. Marmontel, who explains it thus : That sort of amiable ingenuity, or undis-

* “ Let this style have a certain softness and ease, which shall
“ characterise a negligence, not unpleasing in an author who ap-
“ pears to be more solicitous about the thought than the expres-
“ sion.”

guised openness, which seems to give us some degree of superiority over the person who shews it; a certain infantine simplicity, which we love in our hearts, but which displays some features of the character that we think that we could have art enough to hide; and which, therefore, always leads us to smile at the person who discovers this character. La Fontaine, in his Fables, is given as the great example of such *naiveté*. This, however, is to be understood, as descriptive of a particular species only of simplicity.

With respect to simplicity in general, we may remark, that the ancient original writers are always the most eminent for it. This happens from a plain reason, that they wrote from the dictates of natural genius, and were not formed upon the labours and writings of others, which is always in hazard of producing affectation. Hence, among the Greek writers, we have more models of a beautiful simplicity than among the Roman. Homer, Hesiod, Anacreon, Theocritus, Herodotus, and Xenophon, are all distinguished for it. Among the Romans also, we have some writers of this character, particularly Terence, Lucretius, Phædrus, and Julius Cæsar. The following passage of Terence's *Andria*, is a beautiful instance of simplicity of manner in description :

Funus interim
Procedit ; sequimur ; ad sepulchrum venimus

In ignem imposita est ; fletur. Interea hæc soror,
 Quam dixi, ad flammam accessit imprudentius
 Satis cum periculo. Ibi tum exanimatus Pamphilus,
 Bene dissimulatum amorem, et celatum indicat ;
 Occurrit præceps, mulierem ab igne retrahit,
 Mea Glycerium, inquit, quid agis ? Cur te is perditum ?
 Tum illa, ut consuetum facile amorem cerneret,
 Rejecit se in eum, flens quam familiariter *.

All the words here are remarkably happy and elegant ; and convey a most lively picture of the scene described ; while, at the same time, the style appears wholly artless and unlaboured. Let us, next, consider some English writers who come under this class.

Simplicity is the great beauty of Archbishop Tillotson's manner. Tillotson has long been admired as an eloquent writer, and a model for preaching. But his eloquence, if we can call it such,

- * " Meanwhile the funeral proceeds ; we follow ;
- " Come to the sepulchre : the body's placed
- " Upon the pile ; lamented ; whereupon
- " This sister I was speaking of, all wild,
- " Ran to the flames with peril of her life.
- " There ! there ! the frightened Pamphilus betrays
- " His well-dissembled and long hidden love :
- " Runs up and takes her round the waist, and cries,
- " Oh ! my Glycerium ! what is it you do ?
- " Why, why endeavour to destroy yourself ?
- " Then she, in such a manner, that you thence
- " Might easily perceive their long, long love,
- " Threw herself back into his arms, and wept,
- " Oh ! how familiarly !"

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has been often misunderstood. For, if we include, in the idea of eloquence, vehemence and strength, picturesque description, glowing figures, or correct arrangement of sentences, in all these parts of oratory the Archbishop is exceedingly deficient. His style is always pure indeed, and perspicuous, but careless and remiss, too often feeble and languid; little beauty in the construction of his sentences, which are frequently suffered to drag unharmoniously; seldom any attempt towards strength or sublimity. But, notwithstanding these defects, such a constant vein of good sense and piety runs through his works, such an earnest and serious manner, and so much useful instruction conveyed in a style so pure, natural, and unaffected, as will justly recommend him to high regard, as long as the English language remains; not, indeed, as a model of the highest eloquence, but as a simple and amiable writer, whose manner is strongly expressive of great goodness and worth. I observed before, that simplicity of manner may be consistent with some degree of negligence in style; and it is only the beauty of that simplicity which makes the negligence of such writers seem graceful. But, as appears in the Archbishop, negligence may sometimes be carried so far as to impair the beauty of simplicity, and make it border on a flat and languid manner.

Sir William Temple is another remarkable writer in the style of simplicity. In point of or-

nament and correctness, he rises a degree above Tillotson ; though, for correctness, he is not in the highest rank. All is easy and flowing in him ; he is exceedingly harmonious ; smoothness, and what may be called amenity, are the distinguishing characters of his manner ; relaxing sometimes, as such a manner will naturally do, into a prolix and remiss style. No writer whatever has stamped upon his style a more lively impression of his own character. In reading his works, we seem engaged in conversation with him ; we become thoroughly acquainted with him, not merely as an author, but as a man ; and contract a friendship for him. He may be classed as standing in the middle, between a negligent simplicity, and the highest degree of ornament which this character of style admits.

Of the latter of these, the highest, most correct, and ornamented degree of the simple manner, Mr Addison is, beyond doubt, in the English language, the most perfect example : and, therefore, though not without some faults, he is, on the whole, the safest model for imitation, and the freest from considerable defects, which the language affords. Perspicuous and pure he is in the highest degree ; his precision, indeed, not very great ; yet nearly as great as the subjects which he treats of require : the construction of his sentences easy, agreeable, and commonly very musical ; carrying a character of smoothness, more than of strength. In figurative language, he is rich ; particularly in similes

and metaphors ; which are so employed as to render his style splendid without being gaudy. There is not the least affectation in his manner : we see no marks of labour ; nothing forced or constrained ; but great elegance joined with great ease and simplicity. He is, in particular, distinguished by a character of modesty, and of politeness, which appears in all his writings. No author has a more popular and insinuating manner ; and the great regard which he everywhere shews for virtue and religion, recommends him highly. If he fails in any thing, it is in want of strength and precision, which renders his manner, though perfectly suited to such essays as he writes in the Spectator, not altogether a proper model for any of the higher and more elaborate kinds of composition. Though the public have ever done much justice to his merit, yet the nature of his merit has not always been seen in its true light ; for, though his poetry be elegant, he certainly bears a higher rank among the prose writers, than he is entitled to among the poets ; and, in prose, his humour is of a much higher and more original strain, than his philosophy. The character of Sir Roger de Coverly discovers more genius than the critique on Milton.

Such authors as those, whose characters I have been giving, one is never tired of reading. There is nothing in their manner that strains or fatigues our thoughts ; we are pleased, without being dazzled by their lustre. So powerful is the charm of

simplicity in an author of real genius, that it atones for many defects, and reconciles us to many a careless expression. Hence, in all the most excellent authors, both in prose and verse, the simple and natural manner may be always remarked ; although other beauties being predominant, this forms not their peculiar and distinguishing character. Thus Milton is simple in the midst of all his grandeur ; and Demosthenes in the midst of all his vehemence. To grave and solemn writings, simplicity of manner adds the more venerable air. Accordingly, this has often been remarked as the prevailing character throughout all the sacred scriptures ; and indeed no other character of style was so much suited to the dignity of inspiration.

Of authors, who, notwithstanding many excellencies, have rendered their style much less beautiful by want of simplicity, I cannot give a more remarkable example than Lord Shaftsbury. This is an author on whom I had made observations several times before, and shall now take leave of him, with giving his general character under this head. Considerable merit, doubtless, he has. His works might be read with profit for the moral philosophy which they contain, had he not filled them with so many oblique and invidious insinuations against the Christian religion, thrown out, too, with so much spleen and satire, as do no honour to his memory, either as an author or a man. His language has many beauties. It is firm, and supported

in an uncommon degree; it is rich and musical. No English author, as I formerly shewed, has attended so much to the regular construction of his sentences, both with respect to propriety, and with respect to cadence. All this gives so much elegance and pomp to his language, that there is no wonder it should have been highly admired by some. It is greatly hurt, however, by perpetual stiffness and affectation. This is its capital fault. His Lordship can express nothing with simplicity. He seems to have considered it as vulgar, and beneath the dignity of a man of quality to speak like other men. Hence he is ever in buskins; and dressed out with magnificent elegance. In every sentence we see the marks of labour and art; nothing of that ease, which expresses a sentiment coming natural and warm from the heart. Of figures and ornament of every kind, he is exceedingly fond; sometimes happy in them; but his fondness for them is too visible; and, having once laid hold of some metaphor or allusion that pleased him, he knows not how to part with it. What is most wonderful, he was a professed admirer of simplicity; is always extolling it in the ancients, and censuring the moderns for the want of it; though he departs from it himself as far as any one modern whatever. Lord Shaftesbury possessed delicacy and refinement of taste, to a degree that we may call excessive and sickly; but he had little warmth of passion; few strong or vigorous feelings: and the coldness of his character led him to that artificial and

stately manner which appears in his writings. He was fonder of nothing than of wit and raillery; but he is far from being happy in it. He attempts it often, but always awkwardly; he is stiff even in his pleasantry; and laughs in form, like an author, and not like a man *.

From the account which I have given of Lord Shaftsbury's manner, it may easily be imagined, that he would mislead many who blindly admired him. Nothing is more dangerous to the tribe of imitators, than an author, who, with many imposing beauties, has also some very considerable blemishes. This is fully exemplified in Mr Blackwall of Aberdeen, the author of the Life of Homer, the Letters on Mythology, and the Court of Augustus; a writer of considerable learning, and of ingenuity also; but infected with an extravagant love of an artificial style, and of that parade of language which distinguishes the Shaftsburean manner.

Having now said so much to recommend simplicity, or the easy and natural manner of writing,

* It may perhaps be not unworthy of being mentioned, that the first edition of his Enquiry into Virtue was published, surreptitiously I believe, in a separate form, in the year 1699; and is sometimes to be met with; by comparing which with the corrected edition of the same treatise, as it now stands among his works, we see one of the most curious and useful examples that I know, of what is called *Limæ labor*; the art of polishing language, breaking long sentences, and working up an imperfect draft into a highly-finished performance.

and having pointed out the defects of an opposite manner ; in order to prevent mistakes on this subject, it is necessary for me to observe, that it is very possible for an author to write simply, and yet not beautifully. One may be free from affectation, and not have merit. The beautiful simplicity supposes an author to possess real genius ; to write with solidity, purity, and liveliness of imagination. In this case, the simplicity or unaffectedness of his manner, is the crowning ornament ; it heightens every other beauty ; it is the dress of nature, without which all beauties are imperfect. But if mere unaffectedness were sufficient to constitute the beauty of style, weak, trifling, and dull writers might often lay claim to this beauty. And, accordingly, we frequently meet with pretended critics, who extol the dullest writers on account of what they call the “Chaste simplicity of their manner ;” which, in truth, is no other than the absence of every ornament, through the mere want of genius and imagination. We must distinguish, therefore, between that simplicity which accompanies true genius, and which is perfectly compatible with every proper ornament of style, and that which is no other than a careless and slovenly manner. Indeed, the distinction is easily made from the effect produced. The one never fails to interest the reader ; the other is insipid and tiresome.

I proceed to mention one other manner or character of style, different from any that I have yet

spoken of; which may be distinguished by the name of the Vehement. This always implies strength; and is not, by any means, inconsistent with simplicity: but, in its predominant character, is distinguishable from either the strong or the simple manner. It has a peculiar ardour; it is a glowing style; the language of a man, whose imagination and passions are heated, and strongly affected by what he writes; who is therefore negligent of lesser graces, but pours himself forth with the rapidity and fulness of a torrent. It belongs to the higher kinds of oratory; and, indeed, is rather expected from a man who is speaking, than from one who is writing in his closet. The orations of Demosthenes furnish the full and perfect example of this species of style.

Among English writers, the one who has most of this character, though mixed, indeed, with several defects, is Lord Bolingbroke. Bolingbroke was formed by nature to be a factious leader; the demagogue of a popular assembly. Accordingly, the style that runs through all his political writings, is that of one declaiming with heat, rather than writing with deliberation. He abounds in rhetorical figures; and pours himself forth with great impetuosity. He is copious to a fault; places the same thought before us in many different views; but generally with life and ardour. He is bold, rather than correct; a torrent that flows strong, but often muddy. His sentences are varied as to length and shortness; inclining, however, most to long pe-

riods, sometimes including parentheses, and frequently crowding and heaping a multitude of things upon one another, as naturally happens in the warmth of speaking. In the choice of his words, there is great felicity and precision. In exact construction of sentences, he is much inferior to Lord Shaftsbury; but greatly superior to him in life and ease. Upon the whole, his merit, as a writer, would have been very considerable, if his matter had equalled his style. But whilst we find many things to commend in the latter, in the former, as I before remarked, we can hardly find any thing to commend. In his reasonings, for the most part, he is flimsy and false; in his political writings, factious; in what he calls his philosophical ones, irreligious and sophistical in the highest degree.

I shall insist no longer on the different manners of writers, or the general characters of style. Some other, besides those which I have mentioned, might be pointed out; but I am sensible, that it is very difficult to separate such general considerations of the style of authors from their peculiar turn of sentiment, which it is not my business at present to criticise. Conceited writers, for instance, discover their spirit so much in their composition, that it imprints on their style a character of pertness; though I confess it is difficult to say whether this can be classed among the attributes of style, or rather is to be ascribed entirely to the thought. In whatever class we rank it, all appear-

ances of it ought to be avoided with care, as a most disgusting blemish in writing. Under the general heads which I have considered, I have taken an opportunity of giving the character of many of the eminent classics in the English language.

From what I have said on this subject, it may be inferred, that to determine among all these different manners of writing, what is precisely the best, is neither easy nor necessary. Style is a field that admits of great latitude. Its qualities in different authors may be very different ; and yet in them all beautiful. Room must be left here for genius ; for that particular determination which every one receives from Nature to one manner of expression more than another. Some general qualities, indeed, there are of such importance, as should always, in every kind of composition, be kept in view ; and some defects we should always study to avoid. An ostentatious, a feeble, a harsh, or an obscure style, for instance, are always faults ; and perspicuity, strength, neatness and simplicity, are beauties to be always aimed at. But as to the mixture of all, or the degree of predominancy of any one of these good qualities, for forming our peculiar distinguishing manner, no precise rules can be given ; nor will I venture to point out any one model as absolutely perfect.

It will be more to the purpose, that I conclude these dissertations upon style, with a few directions concerning the proper method of attaining a

good style in general ; leaving the particular character of that style to be either formed by the subject on which we write, or prompted by the bent of genius.

The first direction which I give for this purpose is, to study clear ideas on the subject concerning which we are to write or speak. This is a direction which may at first appear to have small relation to style. Its relation to it, however, is extremely close. The foundation of all good style is good sense, accompanied with a lively imagination. The style and thoughts of a writer are so intimately connected, that, as I have several times hinted, it is frequently hard to distinguish them. Whenever the impressions of things upon our minds are faint and indistinct, or perplexed and confused, our style in treating of such things will infallibly be so too. Whereas, what we conceive clearly, and feel strongly, we shall naturally express with clearness and with strength. This, then, we may be assured, is a capital rule as to style, to think closely on the subject, till we have attained a full and distinct view of the matter which we are to clothe in words, till we become warm and interested in it ; then, and not till then, shall we find expression begin to flow. Generally speaking, the best and most proper expressions are those which a clear view of the subject suggests, without much labour or inquiry after them. This is Quintilian's observation, lib. viii. c. 1. : " Plerumque optima " verba rebus cohærent, et cernuntur suo lumine.

“ At nos quærimus illa, tanquam lateant seque
“ subducant. Ita nunquam putamus verba esse
“ circa id de quo dicendum est; sed ex aliis locis
“ petimus, et inventus vim afferimus *.”

In the second place, in order to form a good style, the frequent practice of composing is indispensably necessary. Many rules concerning style I have delivered ; but no rules will answer the end without exercise and habit. At the same time, it is not every sort of composing that will improve style. This is so far from being the case, that by frequent, careless, and hasty composition, we shall acquire certainly a very bad style ; we shall have more trouble afterwards in unlearning faults, and correcting negligencies, than if we had not been accustomed to composition at all. In the beginning, therefore, we ought to write slowly, and with much care. Let the facility and speed of writing be the fruit of longer practice : “ Moram et solicitu-
“ dinem,” says Quinctilian, with the greatest reason, l. x. c. 3. “ initiis impero. Nam primum hoc
“ constituendum ac obtainendum est, ut quam op-
“ time scribamus : celeritatem dabit consuetudo.
“ Paulatim res facilius se ostendent, verba respon-

* “ The most proper words, for the most part, adhere to the thoughts which are to be expressed by them, and may be discovered as by their own light. But we hunt after them as if they were hidden, and only to be found in a corner. Hence, instead of conceiving the words to lie near the subject, we go in quest of them to some other quarter, and endeavour to give force to the expressions we have found out.”

“debunt, compositio prosequetur. Cuncta denique, ut in familia bene instituta, in officio erunt. Summa haec est rei; cito scribendo non fit ut bene scribatur; bene scribendo, fit ut cito *.”

We must observe, however, that there may be an extreme in too great and anxious care about words. We must not retard the course of thought, nor cool the heat of imagination, by pausing too long on every word we employ. There is, on certain occasions, a glow of composition which should be kept up, if we hope to express ourselves happily, though at the expence of allowing some inadvertencies to pass. A more severe examination of these must be left to be the work of correction. For, if the practice of composition be useful, the laborious work of correcting is no less so; is indeed absolutely necessary to our reaping any benefit from the habit of composition. What we have written should be laid by for some little time, till the ardour of composition be past, till the fondness for the expressions we have used be worn off, and

* “I enjoin, that such as are beginning the practice of composition write slowly, and with anxious deliberation. Their great object at first should be, to write as well as possible; practice will enable them to write speedily. By degrees matter will offer itself still more readily; words will be at hand; composition will flow; every thing, as in the arrangement of a well-ordered family, will present itself in its proper place. The sum of the whole is this, by hasty composition, we shall never acquire the art of composing well; by writing well we shall come to write speedily.”

the expressions themselves be forgotten; and then reviewing our work with a cool and critical eye, as if it were the performance of another, we shall discern many imperfections which at first escaped us. Then is the season for pruning redundancies; for examining the arrangement of sentences; for attending to the juncture and connecting particles; and bringing style into a regular, correct, and supported form. This "*Limæ Labor*" must be submitted to by all who would communicate their thoughts with proper advantage to others; and some practice in it will soon sharpen their eye to the most necessary objects of attention, and render it a much more easy and practicable work than might at first be imagined.

In the third place, with respect to the assistance that is to be gained from the writings of others, it is obvious, that we ought to render ourselves well acquainted with the style of the best authors. This is requisite both in order to form a just taste in style, and to supply us with a full stock of words on every subject. In reading authors with a view to style, attention should be given to the peculiarities of their different manners; and in this, and former Lectures, I have endeavoured to suggest several things that may be useful in this view. I know no exercise that will be found more useful for acquiring a proper style, than to translate some passage from an eminent English author into our own words. What I mean is, to take, for instance,

some page of one of Mr Addison's Spectators, and read it carefully over two or three times, till we have got a firm hold of the thoughts contained in it; then to lay aside the book; to attempt to write out the passage from memory, in the best way we can; and having done so, next to open the book, and compare what we have written with the style of the author. Such an exercise will, by comparison, shew us where the defects of our style lie; will lead us to the proper attentions for rectifying them; and among the different ways in which the same thought may be expressed, will make us perceive that which is the most beautiful. But,

In the fourth place, I must caution, at the same time, against a servile imitation of any author whatever. This is always dangerous. It hampers genius; it is likely to produce a stiff manner; and those who are given to close imitation, generally imitate an author's faults as well as his beauties. No man will ever become a good writer or speaker, who has not some degree of confidence to follow his own genius. We ought to beware, in particular, of adopting any author's noted phrases, or transcribing passages from him. Such a habit will prove fatal to all genuine composition. Infinitely better it is to have something that is our own, though of moderate beauty, than to affect to shine in borrowed ornaments, which will at last betray the utter poverty of our genius. On these heads of composing, correcting, reading, and imitating,

I advise every student of oratory to consult what Quintilian has delivered in the tenth book of his Institutions, where he will find a variety of excellent observations and directions, that will deserve attention.

In the fifth place, it is an obvious, but material rule, with respect to style, that we always study to adapt it to the subject, and also to the capacity of our hearers, if we are to speak in public. Nothing merits the name of eloquent or beautiful, which is not suited to the occasion, and to the persons to whom it is addressed. It is to the last degree awkward and absurd, to attempt a poetical florid style, on occasions when it should be our business only to argue and reason; or to speak with elaborate pomp of expression, before persons who comprehend nothing of it, and who can only stare at our unseasonable magnificence. These are defects not so much in point of style, as, what is much worse, in point of common sense. When we begin to write or speak, we ought previously to fix in our minds a clear conception of the end to be aimed at; to keep this steadily in our view, and to suit our style to it. If we do not sacrifice to this great object every ill-timed ornament that may occur to our fancy, we are unpardonable; and though children and fools may admire, men of sense will laugh at us and our style.

In the last place, I cannot conclude the subject without this admonition, that, in any case, and on

any occasion, attention to style must not engross us so much, as to detract from a higher degree of attention to the thoughts; “*Curam verborum,*” says the great Roman critic, “*rerum volo esse sollicitudinem *.*” A direction the more necessary, as the present taste of the age in writing, seems to lean more to style than to thought. It is much easier to dress up trivial and common sentiments with some beauty of expression, than to afford a fund of vigorous, ingenious, and useful thoughts. The latter requires true genius; the former may be attained by industry, with the help of very superficial parts. Hence, we find so many writers frivolously rich in style, but wretchedly poor in sentiment. The public ear is now so much accustomed to a correct and ornamented style, that no writer can, with safety, neglect the study of it. But he is a contemptible one, who does not look to something beyond it; who does not lay the chief stress upon his matter, and employ such ornaments of style to recommend it, as are manly not foppish: “*Ma-jore animo,*” says the writer whom I have so often quoted, “*aggregienda est eloquentia; quæ si toto corpore valet, unguis polire et capillum componere, non existimabit ad curam suam pertinere. Ornatus et virilis et fortis, et sanctus sit; nec effeminatam levitatem, et fuko emen-*

* “ To your expression be attentive; but about your matter
“ be solicitous.” :

“ titum colorem amet; sanguine et viribus
“ niteat *.”

* “ A higher spirit ought to animate those who study eloquence. They ought to consult the health and soundnes of the whole body, rather than bend their attention to such trifling objects as paring the nails and dressing the hair. Let ornament be manly and chaste, without effeminate gaiety, or “ artificial colouring ; let it shine with the glow of health and strength.”

LECTURE XX.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE STYLE OF MR ADDISON IN No. 411. OF THE SPECTATOR.

I HAVE insisted fully on the subject of language and style, both because it is, in itself, of great importance, and because it is more capable of being ascertained by precise rule, than several other parts of composition. A critical analysis of the style of some good author will tend further to illustrate the subject; as it will suggest observations which I have not had occasion to make, and will shew, in the most practical light, the use of those which I have made.

Mr Addison is the author whom I have chosen for this purpose. The Spectator, of which his papers are the chief ornament, is a book which is in the hands of every one, and which cannot be praised too highly. The good sense, and good writing, the useful morality, and the admirable vein of humour which abound in it, render it one

of those standard books which have done the greatest honour to the English nation. I have formerly given the general character of Mr Addison's style and manner, as natural and unaffected, easy, and polite, and full of those graces which a flowery imagination diffuses over writing. At the same time, though one of the most beautiful writers in the language, he is not the most correct; a circumstance which renders his composition the more proper to be the subject of our present criticism. The free and flowing manner of this amiable writer sometimes led him into inaccuracies, which the more studied circumspection and care of far inferior writers have taught them to avoid. Remarking his beauties, therefore, which I shall have frequent occasion to do as I proceed, I must also point out his negligences and defects. Without a free, impartial discussion of both the faults and beauties which occur in his composition, it is evident this piece of criticism would be of no service: and, from the freedom which I use in criticising Mr Addison's style, none can imagine that I mean to depreciate his writings, after having repeatedly declared the high opinion which I entertain of them. The beauties of this author are so many, and the general character of his style is so elegant and estimable, that the minute imperfections I shall have occasion to point out, are but like those spots in the sun, which may be discovered by the assistance of art, but which have no effect in obscuring its lustre. It is, indeed, my judgment, that what

Quintilian applies to Cicero, “ Ille se profecisse “ sciat, cui Cicero valde placebit,” may, with justice, be applied to Mr Addison ; that to be highly pleased with his manner of writing, is the criterion of one’s having acquired a good taste in English style. The paper on which we are now to enter, is No. 411. the first of his celebrated Essays on the Pleasures of the Imagination, in the sixth volume of the Spectator. It begins thus :

“ Our sight is the most perfect, and most delightful of all our senses.”

This is an excellent introductory sentence. It is clear, precise, and simple. The author lays down, in a few plain words, the proposition which he is going to illustrate throughout the rest of the paragraph. In this manner we should always set out. A first sentence should seldom be a long, and never an intricate one.

He might have said, “ Our sight is the most perfect, and the most delightful.” But he has judged better, in omitting to repeat the article *the*. For the repetition of it is proper chiefly when we intend to point out the objects of which we speak, as distinguished from, or contrasted with, each other ; and when we want that the reader’s attention should rest on that distinction. For instance, had Mr Addison intended to say, That our sight is at once the most *delightful*, and the most *useful*, of all

our senses, the article might then have been repeated with propriety, as a clear and strong distinction would have been conveyed. But as between *perfect* and *delightful*, there is less contrast, there was no occasion for such repetition. It would have had no other effect, but to add a word unnecessarily to the sentence. He proceeds :

“ It fills the mind with the largest variety of
“ ideas, converses with its objects at the greatest
“ distance, and continues the longest in action
“ without being tired, or satiated with its proper
“ enjoyments.”

This sentence deserves attention, as remarkably harmonious and well constructed. It possesses, indeed, almost all the properties of a perfect sentence. It is entirely perspicuous. It is loaded with no superfluous or unnecessary words. For, *tired* or *satiated* towards the end of the sentence, are not used for synonymous terms. They convey distinct ideas, and refer to different members of the period ; that this sense “ continues the longest in action without being tired,” that is, without being fatigued with its action ; and also, without being “ satiated with its proper enjoyments.” That quality of a good sentence, which I termed its unity, is here perfectly preserved. It is *our sight* of which he speaks. This is the object carried through the sentence, and presented to us in every member of it, by those verbs, *fills*, *converses*, *continues*, to each of which it is clearly the nominative,

Those capital words are disposed of in the most proper places ; and that uniformity is maintained in the construction of the sentence, which suits the unity of the object.

Observe, too, the music of the period ; consisting of three members, each of which, agreeably to a rule I formerly mentioned, grows and rises above the other sound, till the sentence is conducted, at last, to one of the most melodious closes which our language admits : “ without being tired, or satiated with its proper enjoyments.” *Enjoyments* is a word of length and dignity, exceedingly proper for a close which is designed to be a musical one. The harmony is the more happy, as this disposition of the members of the period, which suits the sound so well, is no less just and proper with respect to the sense. It follows the order of nature. First, we have the variety of objects mentioned, which sight furnishes to the mind ; next, we have the action of sight on those objects ; and lastly, we have the time and continuance of its action. No order could be more natural or happy.

This sentence has still another beauty. It is figurative, without being too much so for the subject. A metaphor runs through it. The sense of sight is, in some degree, personified. We are told of its *conversing* with its objects ; and of its not being *tired* or *satiated* with its *enjoyments* ; all which expressions are plain allusions to the actions and

feelings of men. This is that slight sort of personification which, without any appearance of boldness, and without elevating the fancy much above its ordinary state, renders discourse picturesque, and leads us to conceive the author's meaning more distinctly, by clothing abstract ideas, in some degree, with sensible colours. Mr Addison abounds with this beauty of style beyond most authors ; and the sentence which we have been considering, is very expressive of his manner of writing. There is no blemish in it whatever, unless that a strict critic might perhaps object, that the epithet *large*, which he applies to *variety*, “the largest variety of ideas,” is an epithet more commonly applied to extent than to number. It is plain, that he here employed it to avoid the repetition of the word *great*, which occurs immediately afterwards.

“ The sense of feeling can, indeed, give us a notion of extension, shape, and all other ideas that enter at the eye, except colours ; but, at the same time, it is very much straitened and confined in its operations, to the number, bulk, and distance of its particular objects.”

This sentence is by no means so happy as the former. It is, indeed, neither clear nor elegant. *Extension* and *shape* can, with no propriety, be called *ideas* ; they are properties of matter. Neither is it accurate, even according to Mr Locke's

philosophy (with which our author seems here to have puzzled himself), to speak of any sense “giving us a notion of ideas ;” our senses give us the ideas themselves. The meaning would have been much more clear, if the author had expressed himself thus : “The sense of feeling can, indeed, give “us the idea of extension, figure, and all the “other properties of matter which are perceived “by the eye, except colours.”

The latter part of the sentence is still more embarrassed. For what meaning can we make of the sense of feeling being “confined in its operations, “to the number, bulk, and distance of its particular objects ?” Surely, every sense is confined, as much as the sense of feeling, to the number, bulk, and distance of its own objects. Sight and feeling are, in this respect, perfectly on a level ; neither of them can extend beyond its own objects. The turn of expression is so inaccurate here, that one would be apt to suspect two words to have been omitted in the printing, which were originally in Mr Addison’s manuscript ; because the insertion of them would render the sense much more intelligible and clear. These two words are, *with regard*. “It is very much straitened, and “confined in its operations, with regard to the “number, bulk, and distance of its particular objects.” The meaning then would be, that feeling is more limited than sight *in this respect* ; that it is confined to a narrower circle, to a smaller number of objects.

The epithet *particular*, applied to *objects*, in the conclusion of the sentence, is redundant, and conveys no meaning whatever. Mr Addison seems to have used it in place of *peculiar*, as indeed he does often in other passages of his writings. But *particular* and *peculiar*, though they are too often confounded, are words of different import from each other. *Particular* stands opposed to *general*; *peculiar* stands opposed to what is possessed in *common with others*. *Particular* expresses what, in the logical style, is called *species*; *peculiar* what is called *differentia*. “Its peculiar objects” would have signified in this place, the objects of the sense of feeling, as distinguished from the objects of any other sense; and would have had more meaning than “its particular objects.” Though, in truth, neither the one nor the other epithet was requisite. It was sufficient to have said simply, “its objects.”

“ Our sight seems designed to supply all these
“ defects, and may be considered as a more delicate
“ and diffusive kind of touch, that spreads itself
“ over an infinite multitude of bodies, comprehends
“ the largest figures, and brings into our reach
“ some of the most remote parts of the universe.”

Here again the author’s style returns upon us in all its beauty. This is a sentence distinct, graceful, well arranged, and highly musical. In the latter part of it, it is constructed with three members, which are formed much in the same manner

with those of the second sentence, on which I bestowed so much praise. The construction is so similar, that if it had followed immediately after it, we should have been sensible of a faulty monotony. But the interposition of another sentence between them prevents this effect.

“ It is this sense which furnishes the imagination with its ideas; so that by the pleasures of the imagination or fancy (which I shall use promiscuously), I here mean such as arise from visible objects, either when we have them actually in our view; or when we call up their ideas into our minds by painting, statues, descriptions, or any the like occasion.”

In place of, “ It is this sense which furnishes,” the author might have said more shortly, “ This sense furnishes.” But the mode of expression which he has used, is here more proper. This sort of full and ample assertion, “ it is this which,” is fit to be used when a proposition of importance is laid down, to which we seek to call the reader’s attention. It is like pointing with the hand at the object of which we speak. The parenthesis in the middle of the sentence, “ which I shall use promiscuously,” is not clear. He ought to have said, “ terms which I shall use promiscuously;” as the verb *use* relates, not to the pleasures of the imagination, but to the terms of fancy and imagination, which he was to employ as synonymous. “ Any

“ the like occasion ; to call a painting or a statue “ an occasion,” is not a happy expression, nor is it very proper to speak of “ calling up ideas by “ occasions.” The common phrase, “ any such “ means,” would have been more natural.

“ We cannot indeed have a single image in the “ fancy, that did not make its first entrance through “ the sight ; but we have the power of retaining, “ altering, and compounding those images which “ we have once received, into all the varieties of “ picture and vision that are most agreeable to the “ imagination ; for, by this faculty, a man in a dun- “ geon is capable of entertaining himself with scenes “ and landscapes more beautiful than any that can “ be found in the whole compass of nature.”

It may be of use to remark, that in one member of this sentence there is an inaccuracy in syntax. It is very proper to say, “ altering and compound-“ ing those images which we have once received “ into all the varieties of picture and vision. But we can with no propriety say, “ retaining them into “ all the varieties ;” and yet, according to the manner in which the words are ranged, this construc-
tion is unavoidable. For, *retaining*, *altering*, and *compounding*, are participles, each of which equal-
ly refers to, and governs the subsequent noun, *those
images* ; and that noun again is necessarily con-
nected with the following preposition, *into*. This instance shews the importance of carefully attending

to the rules of grammar and syntax ; when so pure a writer as Mr Addison could, through inadvertence, be guilty of such an error. The construction might easily have been rectified, by disjoining the participle *retaining* from the other two participles, in this way : “We have the power of retaining those “ images which we have once received ; and of al-“ tering and compounding them into all the varie-“ ties of picture and vision ;” or better perhaps, thus : “ We have the power of retaining, altering, “ and compounding those images which we have “ once received, and of forming them into all the “ varieties of picture and vision.” The latter part of the sentence is clear and elegant.

“ There are few words in the English language “ which are employed in a more loose and un-“ circumscribed sense than those of the fancy and “ the imagination.”

“ There are few words which are employed.” It had been better, if our authors here had said more simply, “ Few words in the English language are “ employed.” Mr Addison, whose style is of the free and full, rather than the nervous kind, deals, on all occasions, in this extended sort of phraseology. But it is proper only when some assertion of consequence is advanced, and which can bear an emphasis such as that in the first sentence of the former paragraph. On other occasions, these little words, *it is*, and *there are*, ought to be avoided as

redundant and enfeebling. “ Those of the fancy “ and the imagination.” The article ought to have been omitted here. As he does not mean the powers of “ the fancy and the imagination,” but the words only, the article certainly had no proper place ; neither, indeed, was there any occasion for other two words, *those of*. Better, if the sentence had run thus : “ Few words in the English language “ are employed in a more loose and uncircum-“ scribed sense, than fancy and imagination.”

“ I therefore thought it necessary to fix and “ determine the notion of these two words, as I “ intend to make use of them in the thread of my “ following speculations, that the reader may con-“ ceive rightly what is the subject which I pro-“ ceed upon.”

Though *fix* and *determine* may appear synonymous words, yet a difference between them may be remarked, and they may be viewed, as applied here, with peculiar delicacy. The author had just said, that the words of which he is speaking were *loose* and *uncircumscribed*. *Fix* relates to the first of these, *determine* to the last. We *fix* what is *loose*; that is, we confine the word to its proper place, that it may not fluctuate in our imagination, and pass from one idea to another ; and we *determine* what is *uncircumscribed*, that is, we ascertain its *termini* or limits, we draw the circle round it, that we may see its boundaries. For we cannot

conceive the meaning of a word, nor indeed of any other thing clearly, till we see its limits, and know how far it extends. These two words, therefore, have grace and beauty as they are here applied ; though a writer, more frugal of words than Mr Addison, would have preferred the single word *ascertain*, which conveys, without any metaphor, the import of them both.

“ The notion of these words,” is somewhat of a harsh phrase, at least not so commonly used, as the “ meaning of these words.” “ As I intend to make “ use of them in the thread of my speculations ;” this is plainly faulty. A sort of metaphor is improperly mixed with words in the literal sense. He might very well have said, “ as I intend to make use “ of them in my following speculations.” This was plain language ; but if he chose to borrow an allusion from *thread*, that allusion ought to have been supported ; for there is no consistency in “ making “ use of them in the thread of speculations ;” and, indeed, in expressing any thing so simple and familiar as this is, plain language is always to be preferred to metaphorical. “ The subject which I proceed upon,” is an ungraceful close of a sentence ; better, “ the subject upon which I proceed.”

“ I must, therefore, desire him to remember, “ that by the pleasures of the imagination, I mean “ only such pleasures as arise originally from sight, “ and that I divide these pleasures into two kinds.”

As the last sentence began with, “ I therefore
“ thought it necessary to fix,” it is careless to begin
this sentence in a manner so very similar, “ I must
“ therefore desire him to remember;” especially,
as the small variation of using, *on this account*, or,
for this reason, in place of *therefore*, would have
amended the style. When he says, “ I mean only
“ such pleasures,” it may be remarked, that the
adverb *only* is not in its proper place. It is not
intended here to qualify the verb *mean*, but *such*
pleasures; and therefore should have been placed
in as close connection as possible with the word
which it limits or qualifies. The style becomes
more clear and neat when the words are arranged
thus: “ By the pleasures of the imagination, I
“ mean such pleasures only as arise from sight.”

“ My design being, first of all, to discourse of
“ those primary pleasures of the imagination,
“ which entirely proceed from such objects as are
“ before our eyes; and, in the next place, to speak
“ of those secondary pleasures of the imagination,
“ which flow from the ideas of visible objects,
“ when the objects are not actually before the eye,
“ but are called up into our memories, or formed
“ into agreeable visions of things that are either
“ absent or fictitious.”

It is a great rule in laying down the division of
a subject, to study neatness and brevity as much
as possible. The divisions are then more distinctly

apprehended, and more easily remembered. This sentence is not perfectly happy in that respect. It is somewhat clogged by a tedious phraseology. “ My design being first of all to discourse—in the next place to speak of—such objects as are before our eyes—things that are either absent or fictitious.” Several words might have been spared here ; and the style made more neat and compact.

“ The pleasures of the imagination, taken in their full extent, are not so gross as those of sense, nor so refined as those of the understanding.”

This sentence is distinct and elegant.

“ The last are indeed more preferable, because they are founded on some new knowledge or improvement in the mind of man : yet it must be confessed, that those of the imagination are as great, and as transporting as the other.”

In the beginning of this sentence, the phrase, *more preferable*, is such a plain inaccuracy, that one wonders how Mr Addison should have fallen into it ; seeing *preferable*, of itself, expresses the comparative degree, and is the same with *more eligible* or *more excellent*.

I must observe farther, that the proposition contained in the last member of this sentence is neither clear nor neatly expressed, “ It must be confessed

“ that those of the imagination are as great, and “ as transporting as the other.” In the former sentence, he had compared three things together; the pleasures of the imagination, those of sense, and those of the understanding. In the beginning of this sentence he had called the pleasures of the understanding *the last*: and he ends the sentence, with observing, that those of the imagination are as great and transporting *as the other*. Now, besides that *the other* makes not a proper contrast with *the last*, he leaves it ambiguous, whether, by *the other*, he meant the pleasures of the understanding, or the pleasures of sense; for it may refer to either by the construction; though undoubtedly, he intended that it should refer to the pleasures of the understanding only. The proposition, reduced to perspicuous language, runs thus: “ Yet “ it must be confessed, that the pleasures of the “ imagination, when compared with those of the “ understanding, are no less great and transport- “ ing.”

“ A beautiful prospect delights the soul as “ much as a demonstration; and a description in “ Homer has charmed more readers than a chap- “ ter in Aristotle.”

This is a good illustration of what he had been asserting, and is expressed with that happy and elegant turn for which our author is very remarkable.

“ Besides, the pleasures of the imagination have
“ this advantage above those of the understanding,
“ that they are more obvious, and more easy to
“ be acquired.”

This is also an unexceptionable sentence.

“ It is but opening the eye, and the scene enters.”

This sentence is lively and picturesque. By the gaiety and briskness which it gives the style, it shews the advantage of intermixing such a short sentence as this amidst a run of longer ones, which never fails to have a happy effect. I must remark, however, a small inaccuracy. A *scene* cannot be said to *enter*; an *actor* enters, but a scene *appears* or *presents itself*.

“ The colours paint themselves on the fancy,
“ with very little attention of thought or applica-
“ tion of mind in the beholder.”

This is still beautiful illustration; carried on with that agreeable floweriness of fancy and style, which is so well suited to those pleasures of the imagination, of which the author is treating.

“ We are struck, we know not how, with the
“ symmetry of any thing we see, and immediately
“ assent to the beauty of an object, without inquir-
“ ing into the particular causes and occasions of it.”

There is a falling off here from the elegance of the former sentences. We *assent* to the truth of a proposition ; but cannot so well be said to “ assent “ to the beauty of an object.” *Acknowledge* would have expressed the sense with more propriety. The close of the sentence, too, is heavy and ungraceful—“ the particular causes and occasions of “ it.” Both *particular* and *occasions* are words quite superfluous ; and the pronoun *it* is in some measure ambiguous, whether it refers to *beauty* or to *object*. It would have been some amendment to the style to have run thus : “ We immediately “ acknowledge the beauty of an object, without “ inquiring into the cause of that beauty.”

“ A man of a polite imagination is let into a “ great many pleasures that the vulgar are not “ capable of receiving.”

Polite is a term more commonly applied to manners or behaviour, than to the mind or imagination. There is nothing farther to be observed on this sentence, unless the use of *that* for a relative pronoun, instead of *which* ; an usage which is too frequent with Mr Addison. *Which* is a much more definite word than *that*, being never employed in any other way than as a relative ; whereas *that* is a word of many senses ; sometimes a demonstrative pronoun, often a conjunction. In some cases we are indeed obliged to use *that* for a relative, in order to avoid the ungraceful repetition of

which in the same sentence. But when we are laid under no necessity of this kind, *which* is always the preferable word, and certainly was so in this sentence, “Pleasures *which* the vulgar are “not capable of receiving,” is much better than “pleasures *that* the vulgar,” &c.

“He can converse with a picture, and find an “agreeable companion in a statue. He meets “with a secret refreshment in a description; and “often feels a greater satisfaction in the prospect “of fields and meadows, than another does in the “possession. It gives him, indeed, a kind of pro-“perty in every thing he sees; and makes the “most rude uncultivated parts of nature adminis-“ter to his pleasures; so that he looks upon the “world, as it were, in another light, and discovers “in it a multitude of charms that conceal them-“selves from the generality of mankind.”

All this is very beautiful. The illustration is happy; and the style runs with the greatest ease and harmony. We see no labour, no stiffness, or affectation; but the author writing from the native flow of a gay and pleasing imagination. This predominant character of Mr Addison’s manner, far more than compensates all those little negligencies which we are now remarking. Two of these occur in this paragraph; the first in the sentence which begins with, “It gives him, indeed, a kind of pro-“perty.” To this *it*, there is no proper antece-

dent in the whole paragraph. In order to gather the meaning, we must look back as far as to the third sentence before the first of the paragraph, which begins with “A man of polite imagination.” This phrase, *polite imagination*, is the only antecedent to which this *it* can refer; and even that is an improper antecedent, as it stands in the genitive case, as the qualification only of a man.

The other instance of negligence is towards the end of the paragraph; “So that he looks upon the “world, as it were, in another light.” By “another “light,” Mr Addison means a light different from that in which other men view the world. But though this expression clearly conveyed this meaning to himself when writing, it conveys it very indistinctly to others; and is an instance of that sort of inaccuracy, into which, in the warmth of composition, every writer of a lively imagination is apt to fall; and which can only be remedied by a cool subsequent review. “As it were,” is upon most occasions no more than an ungraceful palliative, and here there was not the least occasion for it, as he was not about to say any thing which required a softening of this kind. To say the truth, this last sentence, “so that he looks upon the world,” and what follows, had better been wanting altogether. It is no more than an unnecessary recapitulation of what had gone before; a feeble adhesion to the lively picture he had given of the pleasures of the imagination. The paragraph would have ended

with more spirit at the words immediately preceding; “the uncultivated parts of nature administer “to his pleasures.”

“ There are, indeed, but very few who know “ how to be idle and innocent, or have a relish of “ any pleasures that are not criminal; every diver- “ sion they take, is at the expence of some one “ virtue or another, and their very first step out “ of business is into vice or folly.”

Nothing can be more elegant, or more finely turned, than this sentence. It is neat, clear, and musical. We could hardly alter one word, or disarrange one member, without spoiling it. Few sentences are to be found more finished, or more happy.

“ A man should endeavour, therefore, to make “ the sphere of his innocent pleasures as wide as “ possible, that he may retire into them with safe- “ ty, and find in them such a satisfaction as a “ wise man would not blush to take.”

This also is a good sentence, and gives occasion to no material remark.

“ Of this nature are those of the imagination, “ which do not require such a bent of thought as “ is necessary to our more serious employments, “ nor, at the same time, suffer the mind to sink

“ into that indolence and remissness, which are
“ apt to accompany our more sensual delights;
“ but, like a gentle exercise to the faculties, awa-
“ ken them from sloth and idleness, without put-
“ ting them upon any labour or difficulty.”

The beginning of this sentence is not correct, and affords an instance of a period too loosely connected with the preceding one. “ Of this nature,” says he, “ are those of the imagination.” We might ask, of what nature? For it had not been the scope of the preceding sentence to describe the nature of any set of pleasures. He had said, that it was every man’s duty to make the sphere of his innocent pleasures as wide as possible, in order that, within that sphere, he might find a safe retreat, and a laudable satisfaction. The transition is loosely made, by beginning the next sentence with saying, “ Of this nature are those of the imagination.” It had been better, if, keeping in view the governing object of the preceding sentence, he had said, “ This advantage we gain,” or “ This satisfaction we enjoy, by means of the pleasures of imagination.” The rest of the sentence is abundantly correct.

“ We might here add, that the pleasures of the fancy are more conducive to health than those of the understanding, which are worked out by dint of thinking, and attended with too violent a labour of the brain.”

On this sentence nothing occurs deserving of mark, except that “worked out by dint of thinking,” is a phrase which borders too much on vulgar and colloquial language, to be proper for being employed in a polished composition.

“ Delightful scenes, whether in nature, painting, “ or poetry, have a kindly influence on the body, “ as well as the mind, and not only serve to clear “ and brighten the imagination, but are able to “ disperse grief and melancholy, and to set the “ animal spirits in pleasing and agreeable notions. “ For this reason, Sir Francis Bacon, in his Essay “ upon Health, has not thought it improper to “ prescribe to his reader a poem or a prospect, “ where he particularly dissuades him from knotty “ and subtile disquisitions, and advises him to pur- “ sue studies that fill the mind with splendid and “ illustrious objects, as histories, fables, and con- “ templations of nature.”

In the latter of these two sentences, a member of the period is altogether out of its place ; which gives the whole sentence a harsh and disjointed cast, and serves to illustrate the rules I formerly gave concerning arrangement. The wrong placed member which I point at, is this ; “ where he particu- “ larly dissuades him from knotty and subtile dis- “ quisitions ;” these words should, undoubtedly, have been placed, not where they stand, but thus : “ Sir Francis Bacon, in his Essay upon

“ Health, where he particularly dissauades the reader from knotty and subtile speculations, has not thought it improper to prescribe to him,” &c. This arrangement reduces every thing into proper order.

“ I have in this paper, by way of introduction, settled the notion of those pleasures of the imagination, which are the subject of my present undertaking, and endeavoured, by several considerations, to recommend to my readers the pursuit of those pleasures; I shall, in my next Paper, examine the several sources from whence these pleasures are derived.”

These two concluding sentences afford examples of the proper collocation of circumstances in a period. I formerly shewed, that it is often a matter of difficulty to dispose of them in such a manner, as that they shall not embarrass the principal subject of the sentence. In the sentences before us, several of those incidental circumstances necessarily come in, “ By way of introduction—by several considerations—in this paper—in the next paper.” All which are, with great propriety, managed by our author. It will be found, upon trial, that there were no other parts of the sentence, in which they could have been placed to equal advantage. Had he said, for instance, “ I have settled the notion (rather the *meaning*) of those pleasures of the imagination, which are the

“ subject of my present undertaking, by way of
“ introduction in this paper, and endeavoured to
“ recommend the pursuit of those pleasures to my
“ readers by several considerations;” we must be
sensible, that the sentence, thus clogged with
circumstances in the wrong place, would neither
have been so neat nor so clear, as it is by the pre-
sent construction.

LECTURE XXI.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE STYLE IN No. 412. OF THE SPECTATOR.

THE observations which have occurred in reviewing that paper of Mr Addison's, which was the subject of the last Lecture, sufficiently shew that, in the writings of an author of the most happy genius and distinguished talents, inaccuracies may sometimes be found. Though such inaccuracies may be overbalanced by so many beauties, as render style highly pleasing and agreeable upon the whole, yet it must be desirable to every writer to avoid, as far as he can, inaccuracy of any kind. As the subject, therefore, is of importance, I have thought it might be useful to carry on this criticism throughout two or three subsequent papers of the Spectator. At the same time, I must intimate, that the Lectures on these papers are solely intended for such as are applying themselves to the study of English style. I pretend not to give instruction to those who are already well acquainted with the powers of language. To them my re-

marks may prove unedifying ; to some they may seem tedious and minute ; but to such as have not yet made all the proficiency which they desire in elegance of style, strict attention to the composition and structure of sentences cannot fail to prove of considerable benefit : and though my remarks on Mr Addison should, in any instance, be thought ill-founded, they will, at least, serve the purpose of leading them into the train of making proper remarks for themselves *. I proceed, therefore, to the examination of the subsequent Paper, No. 412.

“ I shall first consider those pleasures of the
“ imagination, which arise from the actual view
“ and survey of outward objects : and these, I
“ think, all proceed from the sight of what is
“ great, uncommon, or beautiful.”

* If there be readers who think any farther apology requisite for my adventuring to criticise the sentences of so eminent an author as Mr Addison, I must take notice, that I was naturally led to it by the circumstances of that part of the kingdom where these Lectures were read ; where the ordinary spoken language often differs much from what is spoken by good English authors. Hence it occurred to me, as a proper method of correcting any peculiarities of dialect, to direct students of eloquence to analyse and examine, with particular attention, the structure of Mr Addison's sentences. Those papers of the Spectator which are the subject of the following Lectures, were accordingly given out in exercise to students, to be thus examined and analysed ; and several of the observations which follow, both on the beauties and blemishes of this author, were suggested by observations given to me in consequence of the exercise prescribed.

This sentence gives occasion for no material remark. It is simple and distinct. The two words which he here uses, *view* and *survey*, are not altogether synonymous; as the former may be supposed to import mere inspection; the latter more deliberate examination. Yet they lie so near to one another in meaning, that, in the present case, any one of them, perhaps, would have been sufficient. The epithet *actual* is introduced, in order to mark more strongly the distinction between what our author calls the primary pleasures of imagination, which arise from immediate view, and the secondary, which arise from remembrance or description.

“ There may, indeed, be something so terrible
“ or offensive, that the horror or loathsomeness
“ of an object may overbear the pleasure which
“ results from its novelty, greatness, or beauty;
“ but still there will be such a mixture of delight
“ in the very disgust it gives us, as any of these
“ three qualifications are most conspicuous and
“ prevailing.”

This sentence must be acknowledged to be an unfortunate one. The sense is obscure and embarrassed, and the expression loose and irregular. The beginning of it is perplexed by the wrong position of the words *something* and *object*. The natural arrangement would have been, “ There may, indeed, be something in an object so terrible or offensive, that the horror or loathsomeness of it

“ may overbear.” These two epithets, *horror* or *loathsomeness*, are awkwardly joined together. *Loathsomeness* is, indeed, a quality which may be ascribed to an object; but *horror* is not; it is a feeling excited in the mind. The language would have been much more correct, had our author said, “ There may, indeed, be something in an object so terrible or offensive, that the horror or ‘ disgust which it excites may overbear.” The two first epithets *terrible* or *offensive*, would then have expressed the qualities of an object; the latter, *horror* or *disgust*, the corresponding sentiments which these qualities produce in us. *Loathsomeness* was the most unhappy word he could have chosen; for to be *loathsome*, is to be odious, and seems totally to exclude any *mixture of delight*, which he afterwards supposes may be found in the object.

In the latter part of the sentence there are several inaccuracies. When he says, There will be “ such a mixture of delight in the very disgust it “ gives us, as any of these three qualifications are “ most conspicuous,” the construction is defective, and seems hardly grammatical. He meant assuredly to say, “ Such a mixture of delight as is proportioned to the degree in which any of these “ three qualifications are most conspicuous.” We know that there may be a mixture of pleasant and of disagreeable feelings excited by the same object; yet it appears inaccurate to say, that there is any “ delight in the very disgust.” The plural

verb *are*, is improperly joined to “any of these “three qualifications;” for as *any* is here used distributively, and means *any one of these three qualifications*, the corresponding verb ought to have been singular. The order in which the two last words are placed, should have been reversed, and made to stand “prevailing and conspicuous.” They are *conspicuous* because they prevail.

“ By greatness, I do not only mean the bulk of “any single object, but the largeness of a whole “view, considered as one entire piece.”

In a former Lecture, when treating of the structure of sentences, I quoted this sentence as an instance of the careless manner in which adverbs are sometimes interjected in the midst of a period. *Only*, as it is here placed, appears to be a limitation of the following verb *mean*. The question might be put, What more does he than only mean? As the author, undoubtedly, intended it to refer to the “bulk of a single object,” it would have been placed, with more propriety, after these words: “I do not mean the bulk of any single “object only, but the largeness of a whole view.” As the following phrase, “considered as one en-“tire piece,” seems to be somewhat deficient, both in dignity and propriety, perhaps this adjection might have been altogether omitted, and the sentence have closed with fully as much advantage at the word *view*.

“ Such are the prospects of an open champaign country, a vast uncultivated desert, of huge heaps of mountains, high rocks and precipices, or a wide expanse of waters, where we are not struck with the novelty or beauty of the sight, but with that rude kind of magnificence which appears in many of these stupendous works of nature.”

This sentence, in the main, is beautiful. The objects presented are all of them noble, selected with judgment, arranged with propriety, and accompanied with proper epithets. We must, however, observe, that the sentence is too loosely, and not very grammatically, connected with the preceding one. He says, “ Such are the prospects;” *such* signifies of that nature or quality, which necessarily presupposes some adjective, or word descriptive of a quality going before, to which it refers. But in the foregoing sentence, there is no such adjective. He had spoken of *greatness* in the abstract only; and therefore, *such* has no distinct antecedent to which we can refer it. The sentence would have been introduced with more grammatical propriety, by saying, “ To this class belong,” or, “ Under this head are ranged the prospects,” &c. The *of*, which is prefixed to “ huge heaps of mountains,” is misplaced, and has, perhaps, been an error in the printing; as, either all the particulars here enumerated should have had this mark of the genitive, or it should have been prefixed to none

but the first. When, in the close of the sentence, the author speaks of that “rude magnificence which “appears in many of these stupendous works of “nature,” he had better have omitted the word *many*, which seems to except some of them: whereas, in his general proposition, he undoubtedly meant to include all the stupendous works he had enumerated; and there is no question that, in all of them, a rude magnificence appears.

“Our imagination loves to be filled with an object, or to grasp at any thing that is too big for its capacity. We are flung into a pleasing astonishment at such unbounded views: and feel a delightful stillness and amazement in the soul, at the apprehension of them.”

The language here is elegant, and several of the expressions remarkably happy. There is nothing which requires any animadversion except the close, “at the apprehension of them.” Not only is this a languid enfeebling conclusion of a sentence, otherwise beautiful, but “the apprehension of views,” is a phrase destitute of all propriety, and, indeed, scarcely intelligible. Had this adjectiōn been entirely omitted, and the sentence been allowed to close with “stillness and amazement in the soul,” it would have been a great improvement. Nothing is frequently more hurtful to the grace or vivacity of a period, than superfluous dragging words at the conclusion.

“ The mind of man naturally hates every thing
“ that looks like a restraint upon it, and is apt to
“ fancy itself under a sort of confinement when the
“ sight is pent up in a narrow compass, and short-
“ ened on every side by the neighbourhood of walls
“ or mountains. On the contrary, a spacious ho-
“ rizon is an image of liberty, where the eye has
“ room to range abroad, to expatiate at large on
“ the immensity of its views, and to lose itself
“ amidst the variety of objects that offer them-
“ selves to its observation. Such wide and unde-
“ termined prospects are as pleasing to the fancy
“ as the speculations of eternity, or infinitude,
“ are to the understanding.”

Our author's style appears here in all that native beauty which cannot be too much praised. The numbers flow smoothly, and with a graceful harmony. The words which he has chosen, carry a certain amplitude and fulness, well suited to the nature of the subject ; and the members of the periods rise in a gradation, accommodated to the rise of the thought. The eye first “ ranges abroad,” then “ expatiates at large on the immensity of its “ views ;” and, at last, “ loses itself amidst the va-“ riety of objects that offer themselves to its obser-“ vation.” The “ fancy” is elegantly contrasted with the “ understanding,” “ prospects” with “ specula-“ tions,” and “ wide and undetermined prospects” with “ speculations of eternity and infinitude.”

“ But if there be beauty or uncommonness joined with this grandeur, as in a troubled ocean, a heaven adorned with stars and meteors, or a spacious landscape cut out into rivers, woods, rocks, and meadows, the pleasure still grows upon us, as it arises from more than a single principle.

The article prefixed to *beauty*, in the beginning of this sentence, might have been omitted, and the style have run, perhaps, to more advantage thus : “ But if beauty, or uncommonness, be joined to this grandeur.” “ A landscape cut into rivers, woods,” &c. seems unseasonably to imply an artificial formation, and would have been better expressed by, “ diversified with rivers, woods,” &c.

“ Every thing that is new or uncommon raises a pleasure in the imagination, because it fills the soul with an agreeable surprise, gratifies its curiosity, and gives it an idea of which it was not before possessed. We are, indeed, so often conversant with one set of objects, and tired out with so many repeated shows of the same things, that whatever is new or uncommon contributes a little to vary human life, and to divert our minds for a while, with the strangeness of its appearance. It serves us for a kind of refreshment, and takes off from that satiety we are apt to complain of in our usual and ordinary entertainments.”

The style in these sentences flows in an easy and agreeable manner. A severe critic might point out

some expressions that would bear being retrenched. But this would alter the genius and character of Mr Addison's style. We must always remember, that good composition admits of being carried on under many different forms. Style must not be reduced to one precise standard. One writer may be as agreeable, by a pleasing diffuseness, when the subject bears, and his genius prompts it, as another by a concise and forcible manner. It is fit, however, to observe, that in the beginning of those sentences which we have at present before us, the phrase, " raises a pleasure in the imagination," is unquestionably too flat and feeble, and might easily be amended, by saying, " affords pleasure to the imagination ;" and, towards the end, there are two of's which grate harshly on the ear, in that phrase, " takes off from that satiety we are apt to complain of" where the correction is as easily made as in the other case, by substituting " diminishes that satiety of which we are apt to complain." Such instances shew the advantage of frequent reviews of what we have written, in order to give proper correctness and polish to our language.

" It is this which bestows charms on a monster,
" and makes even the imperfections of nature please
" us. It is this that recommends variety, where the
" mind is every instant called off to something new,
" and the attention not suffered to dwell too long, and
" waste itself, on any particular object. It is this like-
" wise, that improves what is great or beautiful, and
" makes it afford the mind a double entertainment."

Still the style proceeds with perspicuity, grace, and harmony. The full and ample assertion, with which each of these sentences is introduced, frequent, on many occasions, with our author, is here proper and seasonable; as it was his intention to magnify, as much as possible, the effects of novelty and variety, and to draw our attention to them. His frequent use of *that*, instead of which, is another peculiarity of his style; but on this occasion in particular, cannot be much commended, as, “it is this “which,” seems in every view, to be better than, “it is this *that*,” three times repeated. I must, likewise, take notice, that the antecedent to, “it is “this,” when critically considered, is not altogether proper. It refers, as we discover by the sense, to “whatever is new or uncommon.” But, as it is not good language to say, “whatever is new be-“stows charms on a monster,” one cannot avoid thinking that our author had done better to have begun the first of these three sentences, with saying, “It is novelty which bestows charms on a “monster,” &c.

“Groves, fields, and meadows, are at any sea-“son of the year pleasant to look upon, but never “so much as in the opening of the spring, when “they are all new and fresh, with their first gloss “upon them, and not yet too much accustomed “and familiar to the eye.”

In this expression, “never so much as in the “opening of the spring,” there appears to be a

small error in grammar ; for when the construction is filled up, it must be read, “ never so much ‘ pleasant.’ ” Had he, to avoid this, said, “ never ‘ so much so,” the grammatical error would have been prevented, but the language would have been awkward. Better to have said, “ but never so agree-“ able as in the opening of the spring.” We readily say, the eye is accustomed to objects ; but to say, as our author has done at the close of the sentence, that objects are “ accustomed to the eye,” can scarcely be allowed in a prose composition.

“ For this reason, there is nothing that more en-
“ livens a prospect than rivers, jetteaus, or falls of
“ water, where the scene is perpetually shifting,
“ and entertaining the sight, every moment, with
“ something that is new. We are quickly tired
“ with looking at hills and valleys, where every
“ thing continues fixed and settled in the same
“ place and posture, but find our thoughts a little
“ agitated and relieved at the sight of such objects
“ as are ever in motion, and sliding away from be-
“ neath the eye of the beholder.”

The first of these sentences is connected in too loose a manner with that which immediately preceded it. When he says, “ For this reason, there is “ nothing that more enlivens,” &c. we are entitled to look for the *reason* in what he had just before said. But there we find no *reason* for what he is now going to assert, except that groves and meadows

are most pleasant in the spring. We know that he has been speaking of the pleasure produced by novelty and variety, and our minds naturally recur to this, as the reason here alluded to; but his language does not properly express it. It is, indeed, one of the defects of this amiable writer, that his sentences are often too negligently connected with one another. His meaning, upon the whole, we gather with ease from the tenour of his discourse. Yet this negligence prevents his sense from striking us with that force and evidence, which a more accurate juncture of parts would have produced. Bating this inaccuracy, these two sentences, especially the latter, are remarkably elegant and beautiful. The close, in particular, is uncommonly fine, and carries as much expressive harmony as the language can admit. It seems to paint what he is describing, at once to the eye, and the ear—"Such "objects as are ever in motion, and sliding away "from beneath the eye of the beholder."—Indeed, notwithstanding those small errors, which the strictness of critical examination obliges me to point out, it may be safely pronounced, that the two paragraphs which we have now considered in this paper, the one concerning greatness, and the other concerning novelty, are extremely worthy of Mr Addison, and exhibit a style, which they who can successfully imitate, may esteem themselves happy.

" But there is nothing that makes its way more directly to the soul than beauty, which immedi-

“ ately diffuses a secret satisfaction and complacency through the imagination, and gives a finishing to any thing that is great or uncommon. “ The very first discovery of it strikes the mind “ with an inward joy, and spreads a cheerfulness “ and delight through all its faculties.”

Some degree of verbosity may be here discovered, as phrases are repeated which seem little more than the echo of one another; such as “ diffusing satisfaction and complacency through the imagination—striking the mind with inward joy—spreading cheerfulness and delight through all its faculties.” At the same time, I readily admit that this full and flowing style, even though it carry some redundancy, is not unsuitable to the gaiety of the subject on which the author is entering, and is more allowable here, than it would have been on some other occasions.

“ There is not, perhaps, any real beauty or deformity more in one piece of matter than another; because we might have been so made, that “ whatever now appears loathsome to us, might “ have shewn itself agreeable; but we find by experience, that there are several modifications of “ matter, which the mind, without any previous “ consideration, pronounces at first sight beautiful “ or deformed.”

In this sentence there is nothing remarkable, in

any view, to draw our attention. We may observe only, that the word *more*, towards the beginning, is not in its proper place, and that the preposition *in* is wanting before *another*. The phrase ought to have stood thus—“ Beauty or deformity in one “ piece of matter, more than in another.”

“ Thus we see that every different species of sensible creatures has its different notions of beauty, “ and that each of them is most affected with the beauties of its own kind. This is no where more remarkable than in birds of the same shape and proportion, when we often see the male determined in his courtship by the single grain or tincture of a feather, and never discovering any charms but in the colour of its species.”

Neither is there here any particular elegance or felicity of language.—“ Different sense of beauty” would have been a more proper expression to have been applied to irrational creatures, than as it stands, “ different notions of beauty.” In the close of the second sentence, when the author says, “ colour of its species,” he is guilty of a considerable inaccuracy in changing the gender, as he had said in the same sentence that the “ male was determined in his courtship.”

“ There is a second kind of beauty, that we find in the several products of art and nature, which does not work in the imagination with that

“ warmth and violence, as the beauty that appears in our proper species, but is apt, however, to raise in us a secret delight, and a kind of fondness for the places or objects in which we discover it.”

Still, I am sorry to say, we find little to praise. As in his enunciation of the subject, when beginning the former paragraph, he appeared to have been treating of beauty in general, in distinction from greatness or novelty; this “second kind of beauty,” of which he here speaks, comes upon us in a sort of surprise, and it is only by degrees we learn that formerly he had no more in view than the beauty which the different species of sensible creatures find in one another. This “second kind of beauty,” he says, “we find in the several products of art and nature.” He undoubtedly means, not in all, but “in several of the products of art and nature;” and ought so to have expressed himself; and in the place of *products*, to have used also the more proper word *productions*. When he adds, that this kind of beauty “does not work in the imagination with that warmth and violence as the beauty that appears in our proper species;” the language would certainly have been more pure and elegant, if he had said, that it “does not work upon the imagination with such warmth and violence, as the beauty that appears in our own species.”

“ This consists either in the gaiety or variety
“ of colours, in the symmetry and proportion of
“ parts, in the arrangement and disposition of bo-
“ dies, or in a just mixture and concurrence of all
“ together. Among these several kinds of beauty,
“ the eye takes most delight in colours.”

To the language here I see no objection that can be made.

“ We no where meet with a more glorious or
“ pleasing show in nature, than what appears in
“ the heavens at the rising and setting of the sun,
“ which is wholly made up of those different
“ stains of light, that shew themselves in clouds
“ of a different situation.”

The chief ground of criticism on this sentence, is the disjointed situation of the relative *which*. Grammatically, it refers to “ the rising and setting of the sun.” But the author meant, that it should refer to *the show* which appears in the heavens at that time. It is too common among authors, when they are writing without much care, to make such particles as *this*, and *which*, refer not to any particular antecedent word, but to the tenour of some phrase, or perhaps the scope of some whole sentence which has gone before. This practice saves them trouble in marshalling their words, and arranging a period: but though it may leave their meaning intelligible, yet it renders that meaning much less perspicuous, determined, and

precise, than it might otherwise have been. The error I have pointed out, might have been avoided by a small alteration in the construction of the sentence, after some such manner as this : “ We “ no where meet with a more glorious and pleas-“ ing show in nature, than what is formed in the “ heavens at the rising and setting of the sun, by “ the different stains of light which show them-“ selves in clouds of different situations.” Our author writes, “ in clouds of a different situation,” by which he means clouds that differ in situation from each other. But as this is neither the obvious nor grammatical meaning of his words, it was necessary to change the expression, as I have done, into the plural number.

“ For this reason, we find the poets, who are al-“ ways addressing themselves to the imagination, “ borrowing more of their epithets from colours “ than from any other topic.”

On this sentence nothing occurs, except a remark similar to what was made before, of loose connection with the sentence which precedes. For, though he begins with saying, “ for this reason,” the foregoing sentence, which was employed about the *clouds and the sun*, gives no reason for the general proposition he now lays down. The *reason* to which he refers, was given two sentences before, when he observed, that the eye takes more delight in colours than in any other beauty ; and it was

with that sentence that the present one should have stood immediately connected.

“ As the fancy delights in every thing that is “ great, strange, or beautiful, and is still more “ pleased the more it finds of these perfections in “ the same object, so it is capable of receiving a “ new satisfaction by the assistance of another sense.”

Another sense here means grammatically, *another sense than fancy*. For there is no other thing in the period to which this expression *another sense*, can at all be opposed. He had not for some time made mention of any *sense* whatever. He forgot to add, what was undoubtedly in his thoughts, *another sense than that of sight*.

“ Thus any continued sound, as the music of “ birds, or a fall of water, awakens every moment “ the mind of the beholder, and makes him more “ attentive to the several beauties of the place “ which lie before him. Thus, if there arises a fra- “ grancy of smells or perfumes, they heighten the “ pleasures of the imagination, and make even the “ colours and verdure of the landscape appear “ more agreeable ; for the ideas of both senses re- “ commend each other, and are pleasanter to- “ gether, than when they enter the mind sepa- “ rately ; as the different colours of a picture, when “ they are well disposed, set off one another, and

“ receive an additional beauty from the advantage
“ of their situation.”

Whether Mr Addison's theory here be just or not, may be questioned. A continued sound, such as that of a fall of water, is so far from “ awaking, every moment, the mind of the beholder,” that nothing is more likely to lull him asleep. It may, indeed, please the imagination, and heighten the beauties of the scene; but it produces this effect, by a soothing, not by an awakening influence. With regard to the style, nothing appears exceptionable. The flow, both of language and of ideas, is very agreeable. The author continues, to the end, the same pleasing train of thought, which had run through the rest of the paper; and leaves us agreeably employed in comparing together different degrees of beauty.

LECTURE XXII.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE STYLE IN No. 413. OF THE SPECTATOR.

" **T**HOUGH in yesterday's paper we considered " how every thing that is great, new, or beautiful, " is apt to affect the imagination with pleasure, we " must own, that it is impossible for us to assign " the necessary cause of this pleasure, because we " know neither the nature of an idea, nor the sub- " stance of a human soul, which might help us " to discover the conformity or disagreeableness of " the one to the other; and, therefore, for want " of such a light, all that we can do in specula- " tions of this kind, is, to reflect on those opera- " tions of the soul that are most agreeable, and to " range, under their proper heads, what is pleasing " or displeasing to the mind, without being able to " trace out the several necessary and efficient causes " from whence the pleasure or displeasure arises."

This sentence, considered as an introductory one, must be acknowledged to be very faulty. An introductory sentence should never contain any

thing that can in any degree fatigue or puzzle the reader. When an author is entering on a new branch of his subject, informing us of what he has done, and what he proposes farther to do, we naturally expect that he should express himself in the simplest and most perspicuous manner possible. But the sentence now before us is crowded and indistinct ; containing three separate propositions, which as I shall afterwards shew, required separate sentences to unfold them. Mr Addison's chief excellency, as a writer, lay in describing and painting. There he is great ; but in methodizing and reasoning, he is not so eminent. As, besides the general fault of prolixity and indistinctness, this sentence contains several inaccuracies, I shall be obliged to enter into a minute discussion of its structure and parts ; a discussion which to many readers will appear tedious, and which, therefore, they will naturally pass over ; but which, to those who are studying composition, I hope may prove of some benefit.

“ Though in yesterday’s paper we considered.”—The import of *though* is notwithstanding that. When it appears in the beginning of a sentence, its relative generally is *yet* : and it is employed to warn us, after we have been informed of some truth, that we are not to infer from it some other thing which we might perhaps have expected to follow : as, “ Though virtue be the only road to happiness, “ yet it does not permit the unlimited gratification of our desires.” Now it is plain, that there

was so much opposition between the subject of yesterday's paper, and what the author is now going to say, between his asserting a fact, and his not being able to assign the cause of that fact, as rendered the use of this adversative particle *though* either necessary or proper in the introduction.—“ We considered how every thing that is great, “ new, or beautiful, is apt to affect the imagination “ with pleasure.”—The adverb *how* signifies, either the means by which, or the manner in which, something is done. But, in truth, neither one nor the other of these had been considered by our author. He had illustrated the fact alone, that they do affect the imagination with pleasure; and with respect to the *quomodo*, or the *how*, he is so far from having considered it, that he is just now going to shew that it cannot be explained, and that we must rest contented with the knowledge of the fact alone, and of its purpose or final cause.—“ We “ must own, that it is impossible for us to assign “ the necessary cause” (he means what is more commonly called the *efficient cause*) “ of this pleasure, because we know neither the nature of an “ idea, nor the substance of a human soul.”—“ The substance of a human soul,” is certainly a very uncouth expression, and there appears no reason why he should have varied from the word *nature*, which would have been equally applicable to *idea* and to *soul*.

“ Which might help us, our author proceeds, “ to discover the conformity or disagreeableness,

“ of the one to the other.”—The *which* at the beginning of this member of the period, is surely ungrammatical, as it is a relative, without any antecedent in all the sentence. It refers, by the construction, to “ the nature of an idea, or the substance of a human soul;” but this is by no means the reference which the author intended. His meaning is, that *our knowing* the nature of an idea, and the substance of a human soul, might help us to discover the conformity or disagreeableness of the one to the other: and therefore the syntax absolutely required the word *knowledge* to have been inserted as an antecedent to *which*. I have before remarked, and the remark deserves to be repeated, that nothing is a more certain sign of careless composition than to make such relatives as *which* not refer to any precise expression, but carry a loose and vague relation to the general strain of what had gone before. When our sentences run into this form, we may be assured there is something in the construction of them that requires alteration. The phrase of discovering “ the conformity or disagreeableness of the one to the other,” is likewise exceptionable; for *disagreeableness* neither forms a proper contrast to the other word *conformity*, nor expresses what the author meant here (as far as any meaning can be gathered from his words) that is, a certain unsuitableness, or want of conformity to the nature of the soul. To say the truth, this member of the sentence had much better have been omitted altogether. “ The conformity or disagreeableness of an idea to the

“ substance of a human soul,” is a phrase which conveys to the mind no distinct nor intelligible conception whatever. The author had before given a sufficient reason for his not assigning the efficient cause of those pleasures of the imagination, because we neither know the nature of our own ideas, nor of the soul: and this farther discussion about the conformity or disagreeableness of the nature of the one to the substance of the other, affords no clear nor useful illustration.

“ And therefore,” the sentence goes on, “ for want of such a light, all that we can do in speculations of this kind, is to reflect on those operations of the soul that are most agreeable, and to range under their proper heads what is pleasing or displeasing to the mind.” The two expressions in the beginning of this member, “ therefore,” and “ for want of such a light,” evidently refer to the same thing, and are quite synonymous. One or other of them, therefore, had better have been omitted. Instead of “ to range under their proper heads,” the language would have been smoother, if *their* had been left out. “ Without being able to trace out the several necessary and efficient causes from whence the pleasure or displeasure arises.” The expression *from whence*, though seemingly justified by very frequent usage, is taxed by Dr Johnson as a vicious mode of speech; seeing *whence* alone has all the power of *from whence*, which, therefore, appears an unnecessary reduplication. I am inclined to think, that the whole of

this last member of the sentence had better have been dropped. The period might have closed with full propriety at the words, “ pleasing or displeasing to the mind.” All that follows, suggests no idea that had not been fully conveyed in the preceding part of the sentence. It is a mere expletive adjection, which might be omitted, not only without injury to the meaning, but to the great relief of a sentence already labouring under the multitude of words.

Having now finished the analysis of this long sentence, I am inclined to be of opinion, that if, on any occasion, we can adventure to alter Mr Addison's style, it may be done to advantage here, by breaking down this period in the following manner : “ In yesterday's paper, we have shewn “ that every thing which is great, new, or beautiful, is apt to affect the imagination with pleasure. “ We must own, that it is impossible for us to ascertain the efficient cause of this pleasure, because “ we know not the nature either of an idea, or of the human soul. All that we can do, therefore, “ in speculations of this kind, is to reflect on the “ operations of the soul which are most agreeable, and to range, under proper heads, what is “ pleasing or displeasing to the mind.” We proceed now to the examination of the following sentences.

“ Final causes lie more bare and open to our observation, as there are often a great variety

“ that belong to the same effect ; and these, though
“ they are not altogether so satisfactory, are gene-
“ rally more useful than the other, as they give
“ us greater occasion of admiring the goodness
“ and wisdom of the first contriver.”

Though some difference might be traced between the sense of *bare* and *open*, yet as they are here employed, they are so nearly synonymous, that one of them was sufficient. It would have been enough to have said, “ Final causes lie more ‘ open to observation.’ ” One can scarcely help observing here, that the obviousness of final causes does not proceed, as Mr Addison supposes, from a variety of them concurring in the same effect, which is often not the case ; but from our being able to ascertain more clearly, from our own experience, the congruity of a final cause with the circumstances of our condition ; whereas the constituent parts of subjects, whence efficient causes proceed, lie, for the most part, beyond the reach of our faculties. But as this remark respects the thought more than the style, it is sufficient for us to observe, that when he says, “ a great variety that belong to the same effect,” the expression, strictly considered, is not altogether proper. The accessory is properly said to belong to the principal ; not the principal to the accessory. Now, an effect is considered as the accessory or consequence of its cause ; and therefore, though we might well say a variety of effects belong to the same cause,

it seems not so proper to say, that a variety of causes belong to the same effect.

“ One of the final causes of our delight in any thing that is great may be this : The supreme Author of our being has so formed the soul of man, that nothing but himself can be its last, adequate, and proper happiness. Because, therefore, a great part of our happiness must arise from the contemplation of his being, that he might give our souls a just relish of such a contemplation, he has made them naturally delighted in the apprehension of what is great or unlimited.”

The concurrence of two conjunctions, *because*, *therefore*, forms rather a harsh and unpleasing beginning of the last of these sentences ; and, in the close, one would think that the author might have devised a happier word than *apprehension*, to be applied to what is *unlimited*. But that I may not be thought hypercritical, I shall make no farther observation on these sentences.

“ Our admiration, which is a very pleasing motion of the mind, immediately rises at the consideration of any object that takes up a good deal of room in the fancy, and, by consequence, will improve into the highest pitch of astonishment and devotion, when we contemplate his nature, that is neither circumscribed by time nor place,

“ nor to be comprehended by the largest capacity
“ of a created being.”

Here our author's style rises beautifully along with the thought. However inaccurate he may sometimes be when coolly philosophising, yet, whenever his fancy is awakened by description, or his mind, as here, warmed with some glowing sentiment, he presently becomes great, and discovers, in his language, the hand of a master. Every one must observe, with what felicity this period is constructed. The words are long and majestic. The members rise one above another, and conduct the sentence, at last, to that full and harmonious close, which leaves upon the mind such an impression as the author intended to leave, of something uncommonly great, awful, and magnificent.

“ He has annexed a secret pleasure to the idea
“ of any thing that is new or uncommon, that he
“ might encourage us in the pursuit of knowledge,
“ and engage us to search into the wonders of
“ creation; for every new idea brings such a plea-
“ sure along with it, as rewards the pains we have
“ taken in its acquisition, and, consequently, serves
“ as a motive to put us upon fresh discoveries.”

The language, in this sentence, is clear and precise; only we cannot but observe in this, and the two following sentences, which are constructed in the same manner, a strong proof of Mr Addison's unreasonable partiality to the particle *that*,

in preference to *which*—“ annexed a secret plea—“ sure to the idea of any thing that is new or un—“ common, that he might encourage us.” Here the first *that* stands for a relative pronoun, and the next *that*, at the distance only of four words, is a conjunction. This confusion of sounds serves to embarrass style. Much better, sure, to have said, “ the idea of any thing which is new or uncom—“ mon, that he might encourage.” The expres—“ sion with which the sentence concludes—“ a mo—“ tive to put us upon fresh discoveries,”—is flat, and, in some degree, improper. He should have said, “ put us upon making fresh discoveries,” or rather, “ serves as a motive inciting us to make “ fresh discoveries.”

“ He has made every thing that is beautiful in
“ our own species pleasant, that all creatures might
“ be tempted to multiply their kind, and fill the
“ world with inhabitants; for it is very remarkable,
“ that wherever nature is crost in the production
“ of a monster (the result of any unnatural mix-
“ ture), the breed is incapable of propagating its
“ likeness, and of founding a new order of crea-
“ tures; so that, unless all animals were allured by
“ the beauty of their own species, generation would
“ be at an end, and the earth unpeopled.”

Here we must, however, reluctantly return to the employment of censure; for this is among the worst sentences our author ever wrote; and contains a variety of blemishes. Taken as a whole

it is extremely deficient in unity. Instead of a complete proposition, it contains a sort of chain of reasoning, the links of which are so ill put together, that it is with difficulty we can trace the connection; and unless we take the trouble of perusing it several times, it will leave nothing on the mind but an indistinct and obscure impression.

Besides this general fault respecting the meaning, it contains some great inaccuracies in language. First, God's having made every thing which "is "beautiful in our species (that is, in the human "species, pleasant," is certainly no motive for "all creatures," for beasts, and birds, and fishes, "to multiply their kind." What the author meant to say, though he has expressed himself in so erroneous a manner, undoubtedly was, "In all the different orders of creatures, he has made every "thing which is beautiful in their own species "pleasant, that all creatures might be tempted to "multiply their kind." The second member of the sentence is still worse. "For, it is very remarkable, that wherever nature is crost in the "production of a monster," &c. The reason which he here gives for the preceding assertion, intimated by the casual particle *for*, is far from being obvious. The connection of thought is not readily apparent, and would have required an intermediate step to render it distinct. But, what does he mean by "nature being crost in the production of a mon- "ster?" One might understand him to mean, "disappointed in its intention of producing a mon-

“ ster;” as when we say, one is crost in his pursuits, we mean, that he is disappointed in accomplishing the end which he intended. Had he said, “ crost by the production of a monster,” the sense would have been more intelligible. But the proper rectification of the expression would be to insert the adverb *as*, before the preposition *in*, after this manner: “ Wherever nature is crost, as in the “ production of a monster;” the insertion of this particle *as*, throws so much light on the construction of this member of the sentence, that I am very much inclined to believe it had stood thus originally in our author’s manuscript; and that the present reading is a typographical error, which, having crept into the first edition of the Spectator, ran through all the subsequent ones.

“ In the last place, he has made every thing that
“ is beautiful, in all other respects, pleasant, or
“ rather has made so many objects appear beauti-
“ ful, that he might render the whole creation
“ more gay and delightful. He has given almost
“ every thing about us the power of raising an
“ agreeable idea in the imagination; so that it is
“ impossible for us to behold his works with cold-
“ ness or indifference, and to survey so many
“ beauties without a secret satisfaction and com-
“ placency.”

The idea here is so just, and the language so clear, flowing, and agreeable, that to remark any

diffuseness which may be attributed to these sentences, would be justly esteemed hypercritical.

“ Things would make but a poor appearance to
“ the eye, if we saw them only in their proper
“ figures and motions; and what reason can we
“ assign for their exciting in us many of those ideas
“ which are different from any thing that exists in
“ the objects themselves (for such are light in co-
“ lours), were it not to add supernumerary orna-
“ ments to the universe, and make it more agree-
“ able to the imagination ?”

Our author is now entering on a theory, which he is about to illustrate, if not with much philosophical accuracy, yet with great beauty of fancy, and glow of expression. A strong instance of his want of accuracy appears in the manner in which he opens the subject. For what meaning is there in things “exciting in us many of those ideas which “are different from any thing that exists in the “objects ?” No one, sure, ever imagined that our ideas exist in the objects. Ideas, it is agreed on all hands, can exist nowhere but in the mind. What Mr Locke’s philosophy teaches, and what our author should have said, is “exciting in us “many ideas of qualities which are different from “any thing that exists in the objects.” The ungraceful parenthesis which follows, “for such are “light and colours,” had far better have been avoided, and incorporated with the rest of the sen-

tence, in this manner : “ Exciting in us many “ ideas of qualities, such as light and colours, “ which are different from any thing that exists “ in the objects.”

“ We are everywhere entertained with pleasing “ shews and apparitions. We discover imaginary “ glories in the heavens, and in the earth, and see “ some of this visionary beauty poured out upon “ the whole creation ; but what a rough unsightly “ sketch of nature should we be entertained with, “ did all her colouring disappear, and the several “ distinctions of light and shade vanish ? In short, “ our souls are delightfully lost and bewildered in “ a pleasing delusion ; and we walk about like the “ enchanted hero of a romance, who sees beauti- “ ful castles, woods, and meadows ; and, at the “ same time, hears the warbling of birds, and the “ purling of streams ; but, upon the finishing of “ some secret spell, the fantastic scene breaks up, “ and the disconsolate knight finds himself on a “ barren heath, or in a solitary desert.”

After having been obliged to point out several inaccuracies, I return, with much more pleasure, to the display of beauties, for which we have now full scope ; for these two sentences are such as do the highest honour to Mr Addison’s talents as a writer. Warmed with the idea he had laid hold of, his delicate sensibility to the beauty of nature is finely displayed in the illustration of it. The

style is flowing and full, without being too diffuse. It is flowery, but not gaudy ; elevated but not ostentatious.

Amidst this blaze of beauties, it is necessary for us to remark one or two inaccuracies. When it is said towards the close of the first of those sentences, “ what a rough unsightly sketch of nature “ should we be entertained with ?” the preposition *with* should have been placed at the beginning, rather than at the end of this member ; and the word *entertained* is both improperly allied here, and carelessly repeated from the former part of the sentence. It was there employed according to its more common use, as relating to agreeable objects. “ We are “ everywhere entertained with pleasing shows.” Here it would have been more proper to have changed the phrase, and said, “ with what a rough “ unsightly sketch of nature should we be present- “ ed ?”—At the close of the second sentence, where it is said, “ the fantastic scene breaks up,” the expression is lively, but not altogether justifiable. An assembly *breaks up* ; a scene *closes* or *disappears*.

Excepting these two slight inaccuracies, the style here, is not only correct, but perfectly elegant. The most striking beauty of the passage arises from the happy simile which the author employs, and the fine illustration which it gives to the thought. The “ enchanted hero,” the “ beautiful castles,” the “ fantastic scene,” the “ secret

“ spell,” the “ disconsolate knight,” are terms chosen with the utmost felicity, and strongly recal all those romantic ideas with which he intended to amuse our imagination. Few authors are more successful in their imagery than Mr Addison ; and few passages, in his works, or in those of any author, are more beautiful and picturesque, than that on which we have been commenting.

“ It is not improbable, that something like this
“ may be the state of the soul after its first separa-
“ tion, in respect of the images it will receive from
“ matter ; though, indeed, the ideas of colours are
“ so pleasing and beautiful in the imagination, that
“ it is possible the soul will not be deprived of
“ them, but, perhaps, find them excited by some
“ other occasional cause, as they are, at present,
“ by the different impressions of the subtle mat-
“ ter on the organ of sight.”

As all human things, after having attained the summit begin to decline, we must acknowledge, that, in this sentence, there is a sensible falling off from the beauty of what went before. It is broken, and deficient in unity. Its parts are not sufficiently compacted. It contains, besides, some faulty expressions. When it is said, “ something like this may be the state of the soul ;” to the pronoun *this*, there is no determined antecedent ; it refers to the general import of the preceding description, which, as I have several times remarked,

always renders style clumsy and inelegant, if not obscure—"the state of the soul after its first separation," appears to be an incomplete phrase, and *first* seems an useless, and even an improper word. More distinct if he had said—"state of the soul immediately on its separation from the body." The adverb *perhaps* is redundant, after having just before said, *it is possible*.

" I have here supposed that my reader is acquainted with that great modern discovery, which is, at present, universally acknowledged by all the inquirers into natural philosophy; namely, that light and colours, as apprehended by the imagination, are only ideas in the mind, and not qualities that have any existence in matter. As this is a truth which has been proved uncontestedably by many modern philosophers, and is, indeed, one of the finest speculations in that science, if the English reader would see the notion explained at large, he may find it in the eighth chapter of the second book of Mr Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding."

In these two concluding sentences, the author, hastening to finish, appears to write rather carelessly. In the first of them, a manifest tautology occurs, when he speaks of what is "universally acknowledged by all inquirers." In the second, when he calls "a truth which has been uncontestedably proved," first, a *speculation*, and afterwards

a *notion*, the language surely is not very accurate. When he adds, “one of the finest speculations in “that science,” it does not, at first, appear what science he means. One would imagine, he meant to refer to “modern philosophers;” for “natural “philosophy” (to which, doubtless, he refers) stands at much too great a distance to be the proper or obvious antecedent to the pronoun *that*. The circumstance towards the close, “if the English reader “would see the notion explained at large, he may “find it,” is properly taken notice of by the author of the Elements of Criticism, as wrong arranged, and is rectified thus: “the English reader, if “he would see the notion explained at large, may “find it,” &c.

In concluding the examination of this paper, we may observe, that, though not a very long one, it exhibits a striking view both of the beauties, and the defects, of Mr Addison’s style. It contains some of the best, and some of the worst sentences that are to be found in his works. But, upon the whole, it is an agreeable and elegant essay.

LECTURE XXIII.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE STYLE IN No. 414. OF THE SPECTATOR.

“ **I**F we consider the works of nature and art, as “ they are qualified to entertain the imagination, “ we shall find the last very defective in compari- “ son of the former; for though they may some- “ times appear as beautiful or strange, they can “ have nothing in them of that vastness and im- “ mensity which afford so great an entertainment “ to the mind of the beholder.”

I had occasion formerly to observe, that an introductory sentence should always be short and simple, and contain no more matter than is necessary for opening the subject. This sentence leads to a repetition of this observation, as it contains both an assertion, and the proof of that assertion; two things which, for the most part, but especially at first setting out, are with more advantage kept separate. It would certainly have been better, if this sentence had contained only the assertion, ending with the word *former*; and if a new one

had then begun, entering on the proofs of nature's superiority over art, which is the subject continued to the end of the paragraph. The proper division of the period I shall point out, after having first made a few observations which occur on different parts of it.

“ If we consider the works.”—Perhaps it might have been preferable, if our author had begun with saying, “ When we consider the works.” Discourse ought always to begin, when it is possible, with a clear proposition. The *if*, which is here employed, converts the sentence into a supposition, which is always in some degree entangling, and proper to be used only when the course of reasoning renders it necessary. As this observation, however, may, perhaps, be considered as over-refined, and as the sense would have remained the same in either form of expression, I do not mean to charge our author with any error on this account. We cannot absolve him from inaccuracy in what immediately follows,—“ the works of nature and art.” It is the scope of the author, throughout his whole paper, to compare nature and art together, and to oppose them in several views to each other. Certainly, therefore, in the beginning, he ought to have kept them as distinct as possible, by interposing the preposition, and saying, “ The works of nature and of art.” As the words stand at present, they would lead us to think that he is going to treat of these **works**, not as contrasted, but as connected ; as united in form-

ing one whole. When I speak of body and soul as united in the human nature, I would interpose neither article nor preposition between them ; “ man is compounded of soul and body.” But the case is altered, if I mean to distinguish them from each other ; then I represent them as separate ; and say, “ I am to treat of the interest of the soul, “ and of the body.”

“ Though they may sometimes appear as beautiful or strange.”—I cannot help considering this as a loose member of the period. It does not clearly appear at first what the antecedent is to *they*. In reading onwards, we see the works of art to be meant ; but from the structure of the sentence, *they* might be understood to refer to “ the former,” as well as to “ the last.” In what follows, there is a greater ambiguity—“ may sometimes appear as “ beautiful or strange.” It is very doubtful in what sense we are to understand *as* in this passage. For, according as it is accented in reading, it may signify, that “ they appear equally beautiful or strange,” to wit, with the works of nature ; and then it has the force of the Latin *tam* ; or it may signify no more than that they “ appear in the light of beautiful and “ strange ; and then it has the force of the Latin *tanquam*, without importing any comparison. An expression so ambiguous is always faulty ; and it is doubly so here ; because, if the author intended the former sense, and meant (as seems most probable) to employ *as* for a mark of *comparison*, it was necessary to have mentioned both the compared ob-

jects ; whereas only one member of the comparison is here mentioned, viz. the works of art ; and if he intended the latter sense, *as* was in that case superfluous and encumbering, and he had better have said simply, “appear beautiful or strange.”—The epithet *strange*, which Mr Addison applies to the works of art cannot be praised. “Strange works,” appears not by any means a happy expression to signify what he here intends, which is new or uncommon.

The sentence concludes with much harmony and dignity—“they can have nothing in them of “that vastness and immensity which afford so “great an entertainment to the mind of the be-“holder.” There is here a fulness and grandeur of expression well suited to the subject ; though, perhaps, *entertainment* is not quite the proper word for expressing the effect which vastness and immensity have upon the mind. Reviewing the observations that have been made on this period, it might, I think, with advantage, be resolved into two sentences, somewhat after this manner : “When we consider the works of nature and of “art, as they are qualified to entertain the imagi-“nation, we shall find the latter very defective in “comparison of the former. The works of art “may sometimes appear no less beautiful or un-“common than those of nature ; but they can have “nothing of that vastness and immensity which “so highly transport the mind of the beholder.”

“ The one,” proceeds our author in the next sentence, “ may be as polite and delicate as the other; “ but can never shew herself so august and magnificent in the design.”

The *one* and the *other*, in the first part of his sentence, must unquestionably refer to the “works “ of nature and of art.” For of these he had been speaking immediately before; and with reference to the plural word, *works*, had employed the plural pronoun *they*. But, in the course of the sentence, he drops this construction ; and passes very incongruously to the personification of art, “ can never “ shew herself.” To render his style consistent, *art*, and not *the works of art*, should have been made the nominative in this sentence, “ Art may “ be as polite and delicate as nature, but can never “ shew herself.” *Polite* is a term oftener applied to persons and to manners, than to things ; and is employed to signify their being highly civilized. Polished, or refined, was the idea which the author had in view. Though the general turn of this sentence be elegant, yet, in order to render it perfect, I must observe, that the concluding words, *in the design*, should either have been altogether omitted, or something should have been properly opposed to them in the preceding member of the period, thus : “ Art may, in the execution, be as polished “ and delicate as nature : but, in the design, can “ never shew herself so august and magnificent.”

“ There is something more bold and masterly
“ in the rough, careless strokes of nature than in
“ the nice touches and embellishments of art.”

This sentence is perfectly happy and elegant; and carries, in all the expressions, that *curiosa felicitas*, for which Mr Addison is so often remarkable. “ Bold and masterly,” are words applied with the utmost propriety. The “ strokes of nature,” are finely opposed to the “ touches of art ;” and the “ rough strokes, to the “ nice touches ;” the former painting the freedom and ease of nature, and the other the diminutive exactness of art; while both are introduced before us as different performers, and their respective merits in execution very justly contrasted with each other.

“ The beauties of the most stately garden or pa-
“ lace lie in a narrow compass, the imagination im-
“ mediately runs them over, and requires something
“ else to gratify her ; but in the wide fields of na-
“ ture, the sight wanders up and down without
“ confinement, and is fed with an infinite variety
“ of images, without any certain stint or number.”

This sentence is not altogether so correct and elegant as the former. It carries, however, in the main, the character of our author’s style; not strictly accurate, but agreeable, easy, and unaffected; enlivened too with a slight personification of the imagination, which gives a gaiety to the period. Perhaps, it had been better, if this personi-

fication of the imagination, with which the sentence is introduced, had been continued throughout, and not changed unnecessarily, and even improperly, into *sight*, in the second member, which is contrary both to unity and elegance. It might have stood “ thus, “ the imagination immediately runs them “ over, and requires something else to gratify her ; “ but, in the wide fields of nature, she wanders up “ and down without confinement.” The epithet *stately*, which the author uses in the beginning of the sentence, is applicable, with more propriety to *palaces* than to *gardens*. The close of the sentence, “ without any certain stint or number,” may be objected to, as both superfluous and ungraceful. It might perhaps have terminated better in this manner, “ she is fed with an infinite variety of images, “ and wanders up and down without confinement.”

“ For this reason, we always find the poet in “ love with a country life, where nature appears in “ the greatest perfection, and furnishes out all “ those scenes that are most apt to delight the “ imagination.”

There is nothing in this sentence to attract particular attention. One would think it was rather the *country* than a *country life*, on which the remark here made should rest. A *country life* may be productive of simplicity of manners, and of other virtues; but it is to the *country* itself, that the properties here mentioned belong, of displaying the

beauties of nature, and furnishing those scenes which delight the imagination.

“ But though there are several of these wild
“ scenes that are more delightful than any artifi-
“ cial shows, yet we find the works of nature still
“ more pleasant, the more they resemble those of
“ art, for in this case our pleasure rises from a
“ double principle ; from the agreeableness of the
“ objects to the eye, and from their similitude to
“ other objects : we are pleased, as well with com-
“ paring their beauties, as with surveying them,
“ and can represent them to our minds either as
“ copies or as originals. Hence it is, that we take
“ delight in a prospect which is well laid out, and
“ diversified with fields and meadows, woods and
“ rivers ; in those accidental landscapes of trees,
“ clouds, and cities, that are sometimes found in the
“ veins of marble, in the curious fretwork of rocks
“ and grottos ; and, in a word, in any thing that
“ hath such a degree of variety and regularity as
“ may seem the effect of design in what we call
“ the works of chance.”

The style, in the two sentences which compose this paragraph, is smooth and perspicuous. It lies open, in some places, to criticism ; but lest the reader should be tired of what he may consider as petty remarks, I shall pass over any which these sentences suggest ; the rather too, as the idea which they present to us, of nature's resembling art, of

art's being considered as an original, and nature as a copy, seems not very distinct nor well brought out, nor indeed very material to our author's purpose.

“ If the products of nature rise in value, according as they more or less resemble those of art, we may be sure that artificial works receive a greater advantage from the resemblance of such as are natural; because here the similitude is not only pleasant, but the pattern more perfect.”

It is necessary to our present design, to point out two considerable inaccuracies which occur in this sentence. “ If the products” (he had better have said the *productions*) “ of nature rise in value according as they more or less resemble those of art.”—Does he mean, that these productions “rise in value,” both according as they “more resemble,” and as they “less resemble,” those of art? His meaning, undoubtedly, is, that they rise in value only, according as they “more resemble them:” and, therefore, either these words, “or less,” must be struck out; or the sentence must run thus, “productions of nature rise “or sink in value, according as they more or less “resemble.” The present construction of the sentence has plainly been owing to hasty and careless writing.

The other inaccuracy is towards the end of the sentence, and serves to illustrate a rule which I

formerly gave concerning the position of adverbs. The author says, “because here, the similitude is “not only pleasant, but the pattern more perfect.” Here, by the position of the adverb *only*, we are led to imagine that he is going to give some other property of the similitude, that is “not only pleasant,” as he says, but more than pleasant; it is useful, or, on some account or other, valuable. Whereas, he is going to oppose another thing to the *similitude* itself, and not to this property of its being *pleasant*; and therefore, the right collocation, beyond doubt, was, “because here, not only “the similitude is pleasant, but the pattern more “perfect;” the contrast lying, not between *pleasant* and *more perfect*, but between *similitude* and *pattern*. Much of the clearness and neatness of style depends on such attentions as these.

“The prettiest landscape I ever saw, was one
“drawn on the walls of a dark room, which stood
“opposite, on one side, to a navigable river, and,
“on the other, to a park. The experiment is
“very common in optics.”

In the description of the landscape which follows, Mr Addison is abundantly happy; but in this introduction to it, he is obscure and indistinct. One who had not seen the experiment of the camera obscura, could comprehend nothing of what he meant. And even, after we understand what he points at, we are at some loss, whether to understand his description as of one continued landscape,

or of two different ones, produced by the projection of two camera obscuras on opposite walls. The scene, which I am inclined to think Mr Addison here refers to, is Greenwich park, with the prospect of the Thames, as seen by a camera obscura, which is placed in a small room in the upper story of the Observatory; where I remember to have seen, many years ago, the whole scene here described, corresponding so much to Mr Addison's account of it in this passage, that, at the time, it recalled it to my memory. As the Observatory stands in the middle of the park, it overlooks, from one side, both the river and the park; and the objects afterwards mentioned, the ships, the trees, and the deer, are presented in one view, without needing any assistance from opposite walls. Put into plainer language, the sentence might run thus: "The prettiest landscape I ever saw, was one formed by a camera obscura, a common optical instrument, on the wall of a dark room, which overlooked a navigable river and a park."

"Here you might discover the waves and fluctuations of the water in strong and proper colours, with the picture of a ship entering at one end, and sailing by degrees through the whole piece. On another, there appeared the green shadows of trees waving to and fro with the wind, and herds of deer among them in miniature, leaping about upon the wall."

Bating one or two small inaccuracies, this is beautiful and lively painting. The principal inaccuracy lies in the connection of the two sentences, *Here* and *On another*. I suppose the author meant on *one side* and *on another side*. As it stands, *another* is ungrammatical, having nothing to which it refers. But the fluctuations of the water, the ship entering and sailing on by degrees, the trees waving in the wind, and the herds of deer among them leaping about, is all very elegant, and gives a beautiful conception of the scene meant to be described.

“ I must confess, the novelty of such a sight
“ may be one occasion of its pleasantness to the
“ imagination ; but certainly the chief reason is its
“ near resemblance to nature ; as it does not only,
“ like other pictures, give the colour and figure,
“ but the motion of the things it represents.”

In this sentence there is nothing remarkable, either to be praised or blamed. In the conclusion, instead of “the things it represents,” the regularity of correct style requires “the things which it represents.” In the beginning, as “one occasion,” and the “chief reason,” are opposed to one another, I should think it better to have repeated the same word “one reason of its pleasantness to the imagination, but certainly the chief reason is,” &c.

“ We have before observed, that there is gene-

“ rally, in nature, something more grand and au-
“ gust than what we meet with in the curiosities
“ of art. When, therefore, we see this imitated
“ in any measure, it gives us a nobler and more
“ exalted kind of pleasure, than what we receive
“ from the nicer and more accurate productions
“ of art.”

It would have been better to have avoided terminating these two sentences in a manner so familiar to each other; “curiosities of art—productions of art.”

“ On this account, our English gardens are not
“ so entertaining to the fancy as those in France
“ and Italy, where we see a large extent of ground
“ covered with an agreeable mixture of garden
“ and forest, which represent everywhere an arti-
“ ficial rudeness, much more charming than that
“ neatness and elegance which we meet with in
“ those of our own country.”

The expression, “represent everywhere an artificial rudeness,” is so inaccurate, that I am inclined to think, what stood in Mr Addison’s manuscript must have been “present everywhere.” For the mixture of garden and forest does not *represent*, but actually *exhibits* or *presents*, artificial rudeness. That mixture *represents* indeed *natural rudeness*; that is, is designed to imitate it; but it in reality *is*, and “presents artificial rudeness.”

“ It might, indeed, be of ill consequence to the public, as well as unprofitable to private persons, “ to alienate so much ground from pasturage and “ the plough, in many parts of a country that is “ well peopled and cultivated to a far greater advantage. But why may not a whole estate be “ thrown into a kind of garden by frequent plantations, that may turn as much to the profit as “ the pleasure of the owner ? A marsh overgrown “ with willows, or a mountain shaded with oaks, “ are not only more beautiful, but more beneficial, than when they lie bare and unadorned. “ Fields of corn make a pleasant prospect ; and if “ the walks were a little taken care of that lie between them, and the natural embroidery of the “ meadows were helped and improved by some “ small additions of art, and the several rows of “ hedges were set off by trees and flowers that the “ soil was capable of receiving, a man might make “ a pretty landscape of his own possessions.”

The ideas here are just, and the style is easy and perspicuous, though in some places bordering on the careless. In that passage, for instance, “ if the walks were a little taken care of that lie between them ;” one member is clearly out of its place, and the turn of the phrase, “ a little taken care of,” is vulgar and colloquial. Much better if it had run thus, “ if a little care were bestowed on the walks that lie between them.”

“Writers who have given us an account of China tell us, the inhabitants of that country laugh at the plantations of our Europeans, which are laid out by the rule and the line; because, they say, any one may place trees in equal rows and uniform figures. They choose rather to shew a genius in works of this nature, and, therefore, always conceal the art by which they direct themselves. They have a word, it seems, in their language, by which they express the particular beauty of a plantation, that thus strikes the imagination at first sight, without discovering what it is that has so agreeable an effect.”

These sentences furnish occasion for no remark, except that in the last of them, *particular* is improperly used instead of *peculiar*; “the peculiar beauty of a plantation that thus strikes the imagination,” was the phrase to have conveyed the idea which the author meant; namely, the beauty which distinguishes it from plantations of another kind.”

“Our British gardeners, on the contrary, instead of humouuring nature, love to deviate from it as much as possible. Our trees rise in cones, globes, and pyramids. We see the marks of the scissars on every plant and bush.”

These sentences are lively and elegant. They make an agreeable diversity from the strain of those

which went before, and are marked with the hand of Mr Addison. I have to remark only, that, in the phrase, “instead of humouring nature, love to “deviate from it,” *humouring* and *deviating* are terms not properly opposed to each other; a sort of personification of nature is begun in the first of them which is not supported in the second. To *humouring*, was to have been opposed *thwarting*; or if *deviating* was kept, *following*, or *going along with nature*, was to have been used.

“I do not know whether I am singular in my
“opinion, but, for my own part, I would rather
“look upon a tree, in all its luxuriancy and diffu-
“sion of boughs and branches, than when it is thus
“cut and trimmed into a mathematical figure;
“and cannot but fancy that an orchard, in flower,
“looks infinitely more delightful, than all the lit-
“tle labyrinths of the most finished parterre.”

This sentence is extremely harmonious, and every way beautiful. It carries all the characteristics of our author’s natural, graceful, and flowing language. A tree “in all its luxuriancy and diffusion of boughs and branches,” is a remarkably happy expression. The author seems to become luxuriant in describing an object which is so, and thereby renders the sound a perfect echo to the sense.

“But as our great modellers of gardens have

“ their magazines of plants to dispose of, it is very
“ natural in them, to tear up all the beautiful
“ plantations of fruit trees, and contrive a plan
“ that may most turn to their profit, in taking off
“ their evergreens, and the like moveable plants,
“ with which their shops are plentifully stocked.”

An author should always study to conclude, when it is in his power, with grace and dignity. It is somewhat unfortunate, that this paper did not end, as it might very well have done, with the former beautiful period. The impression left on the mind by the beauties of nature with which he had been entertaining us, would then have been more agreeable. But in this sentence there is a great falling off; and we return with pain from those pleasing objects, to the insignificant contents of a nursery-man's shop.

LECTURE XXIV.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE STYLE IN A PASSAGE OF DEAN SWIFT'S WRITINGS.

My design, in the four preceding Lectures, was not merely to appreciate the merit of Mr Addison's style, by pointing out the faults and the beauties that are mingled in the writings of that great author. They were not composed with any view to gain the reputation of a critic ; but intended for the assistance of such as are desirous of studying the most proper and elegant construction of sentences in the English language. To such, it is hoped, they may be of advantage ; as the proper application of rules respecting style will always be best learned by means of the illustration which examples afford. I conceive that examples, taken from the writings of an author so justly esteemed, would, on that account, not only be more attended to, but would also produce this good effect, of familiarising those who study composition with the style of a writer, from whom they may, upon the whole, derive great benefit. With the same view, I

shall, in this Lecture, give one critical exercise more of the same kind, upon the style of an author of a different character, Dean Swift; repeating the intimation I gave formerly, that such as stand in need of no assistance of this kind, and who therefore will naturally consider such minute discussions concerning the propriety of words, and structure of sentences, as beneath their attention, had best pass over what will seem to them a tedious part of the work.

I formerly gave the general character of Dean Swift's style. He is esteemed one of our most correct writers. His style is of the plain and simple kind; free from all affectation, and all superfluity; perspicuous, manly, and pure. These are its advantages. But we are not to look for much ornament and grace in it*. On the contrary, Dean Swift seems to have slighted and despised the ornaments of language, rather than to have studied them. His arrangement is often loose

* I am glad to find, that, in my judgment concerning this author's composition, I have coincided with the opinion of a very able critic: "This easy and safe conveyance of meaning, "it was Swift's desire to attain, and for having attained, he "certainly deserves praise, though, perhaps, not the highest "praise. For purposes merely didactic, when something is to "be told that was not known before, it is in the highest de- "gree proper: but against that inattention by which known "truths are suffered to be neglected, it makes no provision: "it instructs, but does not persuade." Johnson's Lives of the Poets, in Swift.

and negligent. In elegant, musical, and figurative language, he is much inferior to Mr Addison. His manner of writing carries in it the character of one who rests altogether upon his sense, and aims at no more than giving his meaning in a clear and concise manner.

That part of his writings, which I shall now examine, is the beginning of the treatise entitled, “A Proposal for correcting, improving, and ascertaining the English Tongue,” in a letter addressed to the Earl of Oxford, then Lord High Treasurer. I was led, by the nature of the subject, to choose this treatise; but, in justice to the Dean, I must observe, that after having examined it, I do not esteem it one of his most correct productions; but am apt to think it has been more hastily composed than some other of them. It bears the title and form of a letter: but it is, however, in truth, a treatise designed for the public; and, therefore, in examining it, we cannot proceed upon the indulgence due to an epistolary correspondence. When a man addresses himself to a friend only, it is sufficient if he makes himself fully understood by him; but when an author writes for the public, whether he employ the form of an epistle or not, we are always entitled to expect, that he shall express himself with accuracy and care. Our author begins thus:

“What I had the honour of mentioning to your Lordship, some time ago, in conversation, was not

" a new thought, just then started by accident or
" occasion, but the result of long reflection ; and I
" have been confirmed in my sentiments by the
" opinion of some very judicious persons with
" whom I consulted."

The disposition of circumstances in a sentence, such as serve to limit or to qualify some assertion, or to denote time and place, I formerly shewed to be a matter of nicety ; and I observed, that it ought to be always held a rule, not to crowd such circumstances together, but rather to intermix them with more capital words, in such different parts of the sentence as can admit them naturally. Here are two circumstances of this kind placed together, which had better have been separated. " Some time ago, in conversation"—better thus :— " What I had the honour, some time ago, of mentioning to your lordship in conversation—was not a new thought," proceeds our author, " started by accident or occasion." The different meaning of these two words may not at first occur : they have, however, a distinct meaning, and are properly used : for it is one very laudable property of our author's style, that it is seldom encumbered with superfluous, synonymous words. " Started by accident," is fortuitously, or at random; started " by occasion," is, by some incident which at that time gave birth to it. His meaning is, that it was not a new thought which either casually sprung up in his mind, or was suggested to him, for the first time, by the train of the dis-

course ; but, as he adds, “ was the result of long reflection.”—He proceeds :

“ They all agreed, that nothing would be of greater use towards the improvement of knowledge and politeness, than some effectual method, for correcting, enlarging, and ascertaining our language ; and they think it a work very possible to be compassed under the protection of a prince, the countenance and encouragement of a ministry, and the care of proper persons chosen for such an undertaking.”

This is an excellent sentence ; clear and elegant. The words are all simple, well chosen, and expressive ; and arranged in the most proper order. It is a harmonious period too, which is a beauty not frequent in our author. The last part of it consists of three members, which gradually rise and swell above one another, without any affected or unsuitable pomp,—“ under the protection of a prince, the countenance and encouragement of a ministry, and the care of proper persons chosen for such an undertaking.” We may remark, in the beginning of the sentence, the proper use of the preposition *towards*—“ greater use towards the improvement of knowledge and politeness”—importing the pointing or tendency of any thing to a certain end ; which could not have been so well expressed by the preposition *for*, commonly employed in place of *towards*, by authors who are less attentive, than Dean Swift was, to the force of words.

One fault might, perhaps, be found both with this and the former sentence, considered as introductory ones. We expect, that an introduction is to unfold, clearly and directly, the subject that is to be treated of. In the first sentence our author had told us, of a thought he mentioned to his Lordship, in conversation, which had been the result of long reflection, and concerning which he had consulted judicious persons. But what that thought was, we are never told directly. We gather it, indeed, from the second sentence, wherein he informs us, in what these judicious persons agreed ; namely, that some method for improving the language was both useful and practicable. But this indirect method of opening the subject, would have been very faulty in a regular treatise ; though the ease of the epistolary form, which our author here assumes in addressing his patron, may excuse it in the present case.

“ I was glad to find your Lordship’s answer in
“ so different a style from what hath commonly
“ been made use of, on the like occasions, for some
“ time past ; ‘ That all such thoughts must be de-
“ ferred to a time of peace ; ’ a topic which some
“ have carried so far, that they would not have us,
“ by any means, think of preserving our civil and
“ religious constitution, because we are engaged
“ in a war abroad.”

This sentence also is clear and elegant ; only there is one inaccuracy, when he speaks of his

Lordship's *answer* being in so different a style from what had formerly been used. His answer to what? or to whom? For, from any thing going before, it does not appear that any application or address had been made to his Lordship by those persons, whose opinion was mentioned in the preceding sentence; and to whom the answer, here spoken of, naturally refers. There is a little indistinctness, as I before observed, in our author's manner of introducing his subject here. We may observe too, that the phrase—"glad to find your "answer in so different a style"—though abundantly suited to the language of conversation, or of a familiar letter, yet, in regular composition, requires an additional word—"glad to find your answer run in so different a style."

" It will be among the distinguishing marks of " your ministry, my Lord, that you have a genius " above all such regards, and that no reasonable " proposal for the honour, the advantage, or orna- " ment of your country, however foreign to your " immediate office, was ever neglected by you."

The phrase—"a genius above all such regards," both seems somewhat harsh, and does not clearly express what the author means, namely, the "con- " fined views" of those who neglected every thing that belonged to the arts of peace in the time of war.—Except this expression, there is nothing that can be subject to the least reprobation, in this sentence, nor in all that follows, to the end of the paragraph.

“ I confess the merit of this candour and con-
“ descension is very much lessened, because your
“ Lordship hardly leaves us room to offer our good
“ wishes; removing all our difficulties, and supply-
“ ing our wants, faster than the most visionary
“ projector can adjust his schemes. And therefore,
“ my Lord, the design of this paper is not so much
“ to offer you ways and means, as to complain of
“ a grievance, the redressing of which is to be your
“ own work, as much as that of paying the na-
“ tion's debts, or opening a trade into the South
“ Sea ; and though not of such immediate benefit
“ as either of these, or any other of your glorious
“ actions, yet, perhaps, in future ages not less to
“ your honour.”

The compliments which the Dean here pays to his patron are very high and strained ; and shew, that, with all his surliness, he was as capable, on some occasions, of making his court to a great man by flattery, as other writers. However, with respect to the style, which is the sole object of our present consideration, every thing here, as far as appears to me, is faultless. In these sentences, and, indeed, throughout this paragraph, in general, which we have now ended, our author's style appears to great advantage. We see that ease and simplicity, that correctness and distinctness, which particularly characterise it. It is very remarkable how few Latinised words Dean Swift employs. No writer, in our language, is so purely English as he is, or borrows so little assistance from words of fo-

reign derivation. From none can we take a better model of the choice and proper significancy of words. It is remarkable, in the sentences we have now before us, how plain all the expressions are, and yet, at the same time, how significant; and in the midst of that high strain of compliment into which he rises, how little there is of pomp, or glare of expression. How very few writers can preserve this manly temperance of style; or would think a compliment of this nature supported with sufficient dignity, unless they had embellished it with some of those high sounding words, whose chief effect is no other than to give their language a stiff and forced appearance.

“ My Lord, I do here, in the name of all the
“ learned and polite persons of the nation, com-
“ plain to your Lordship, as first minister, that our
“ language is extremely imperfect; that its daily
“ improvements are by no means in proportion to
“ its daily corruptions; that the pretenders to po-
“ lish and refine it, have chiefly multiplied abuses
“ and absurdities; and that, in many instances, it
“ offends against every part of grammar.”

The turn of this sentence is extremely elegant. He had spoken before of a grievance for which he sought redress, and he carries on the allusion, by entering here directly on his subject, in the style of a public representation presented to the minister of state. One imperfection, however, there is in this sentence, which, luckily for our purpose,

serves to illustrate a rule before given, concerning the position of adverbs, so as to avoid ambiguity. It is in the middle of the sentence ;—“ that the “ pretenders to polish and refine it, have chiefly “ multiplied abuses and absurdities.”—Now, concerning the import of this adverb *chiefly*, I ask, whether it signifies that these pretenders to polish the language have been the “ chief persons” who have multiplied its abuses, in distinction from others ; or that the “ chief thing” which these pretenders have done, is to multiply the abuses of our language, in opposition to their “ doing any thing to refine it ?” These two meanings are really different ; and yet, by the position which the word *chiefly* has in the sentence, we are left at a loss in which to understand it. The construction would lead us rather to the latter sense ; that the chief thing which these pretenders have done, is to multiply the abuses of our language. But it is more than probable, that the former sense was what the Dean intended, as it carries more of his usual satirical edge ; “ that the pretended refiners of our language “ were, in fact, its chief corruptors ;” on which supposition, his words ought to have run thus : “ that “ the pretenders to polish and refine it, have been “ the chief persons to multiply its abuses and ab- “ surdities ;” which would have rendered the sense perfectly clear.

Perhaps, too, there might be ground for observing farther upon this sentence, that as language is the object with which it sets out ; “ that our lan-

“ guage is extremely imperfect ;” and as there follows an enumeration concerning language, in three particulars, it had been better if language had been kept the ruling word, or the nominative to every verb, without changing the construction, by making *pretenders* the ruling word, as is done in the second member of the enumeration, and then, in the third, returning again to the former word “ language —“ that the pretenders to polish—and that, in many “ instances, it offends.”—I am persuaded, that the structure of the sentence would have been more neat and happy, and its unity more complete, if the members of it had been arranged thus : “ That “ our language is extremely imperfect ; that its “ daily improvements are by no means in propor- “ tion to its daily corruptions ; that, in many in- “ stances, it offends against every part of gram- “ mar ; and that the pretenders to polish and re- “ fine it, have been the chief persons to multiply “ its abuses and absurdities.”—This degree of at- tention seemed proper to be bestowed on such a sentence as this, in order to shew how it might have been conducted after the most perfect man- ner. Our author, after having said,

“ Lest your Lordship should think my censure “ too severe, I shall take leave to be more particu- “ lar ;” proceeds in the following paragraph :

“ I believe your Lordship will agree with me, “ in the reason why our language is less refined “ than those of Italy, Spain, or France.”

I am sorry to say, that now we shall have less to commend in our author. For the whole of this paragraph, on which we are entering, is, in truth, perplexed and inaccurate. Even, in this short sentence, we may discern an inaccuracy—"why our language "is less refined than those of Italy, Spain, or "France;" putting the pronoun *those* in the plural, when the antecedent substantive to which it refers is in the singular, *our language*. Instances of this kind may sometimes be found in English authors; but they sound harsh to the ear, and are certainly contrary to the purity of grammar. By a very little attention, this inaccuracy might have been remedied, and the sentence have been made to run much better in this way; "why our language is "less refined than the Italian, Spanish, or French."

" It is plain, that the Latin tongue, in its purity, "was never in this island; towards the conquest "of which, few or no attempts were made till the "time of Claudius; neither was that language "ever so vulgar in Britain, as it is known to have "been in Gaul and Spain."

To say, that "the Latin tongue, in its purity, was "never in this island," is very careless style; it ought to have been, "was never spoken in this island." In the progress of the sentence, he means to give a reason why the Latin was never spoken in its purity amongst us, because our island was not conquered by the Romans till after the purity of their

tongue began to decline. But this reason ought to have been brought out more clearly. This might easily have been done, and the relation of the several parts of the sentence to each other much better pointed out by means of a small variation ; thus : “ It is plain, that the Latin tongue, in its purity, was never spoken in this island, as few or no attempts towards the conquest of it were made till the time of Claudius.” He adds, “ Neither was that language ever so vulgar in Britain.” *Vulgar* was one of the worst words he could have chosen for expressing what he means here; namely, that the Latin tongue was at no time so *general*, or so much in *common use*, in Britain, as it is known to have been in Gaul and Spain. *Vulgar*, when applied to language, commonly signifies impure, or debased language, such as is spoken by the low people, which is quite opposite to the author’s sense here ; for instead of meaning to say, that the Latin spoken in Britain was not so debased as what was spoken in Gaul and Spain ; he means just the contrary, and had been telling us, that we never were acquainted with the Latin at all till its purity began to be corrupted.

“ Further, we find that the Roman legions here were at length all recalled to help their country against the Goths, and other barbarous invaders.”

The chief scope of this sentence is, to give a reason why the Latin tongue did not strike any

deep root in this island, on account of the short continuance of the Romans in it. He goes on :

“ Meantime the Britons, left to shift for themselves, and daily harassed by cruel inroads from the Picts, were forced to call in the Saxons for their defence; who, consequently, reduced the greatest part of the island to their own power, drove the Britons into the most remote and mountainous parts, and the rest of the country, in customs, religion, and language, became wholly Saxon.”

This is a very exceptionable sentence. First, the phrase, “left to shift for themselves,” is rather a low phrase, and too much in the familiar style to be proper in a grave treatise. Next, as the sentence advances, “forced to call in the Saxons for their defence, who, consequently, reduced the greatest part of the island to their own power.” What is the meaning of *consequently* here? If it means *afterwards*, or *in progress of time*, this, certainly, is not a sense in which *consequently*, is often taken; and therefore the expression is chargeable with obscurity. The adverb *consequently*, in its most common acceptation, denotes one thing following from another, as an effect from a cause. If he uses it in this sense, and means that the Britons being subdued by the Saxons was a necessary consequence of their having called in these Saxons to their assistance, this consequence is drawn too abruptly, and needed

more explanation. For though it has often happened, that nations have been subdued by their own auxiliaries, yet this is not a consequence of such a nature that it can be assumed, as seems here to be done, for a first and self-evident principle. But further, what shall we say to this phrase, “reduced “the greatest part of the island to their own power?” we say, “reduce to rule, reduce to practice;” we can say, that “one nation reduces another to subjection.” But when *dominion* or *power* is used, we always, as far as I know, say, “reduce under “their power.” “Reduce to their power,” is so harsh and uncommon an expression, that, though Dean Swift’s authority in language be very great, yet, in the use of this phrase, I am of opinion that it would not be safe to follow his example.

Besides these particular inaccuracies, this sentence is chargeable with want of unity in the composition of the whole. The persons and the scene are too often changed upon us. First, the Britons are mentioned, who are harassed by inroads from the Picts; next, the Saxons appear, who subdue the greatest part of the island, and drive the Britons into the mountains; and, lastly, the rest of the country is introduced, and a description given of the change made upon it. All this forms a groupe of various objects, presented in such quick succession, that the mind finds it difficult to comprehend them under one view. Accordingly it is quoted in the Elements of Criticism, as an instance of a sentence rendered faulty by the breach of unity.

“ This I take to be the reason why there are more Latin words remaining in the British than the old Saxon ; which, excepting some few variations in the orthography, is the same in most original words with our present English, as well as with the German and other northern dialects.”

This sentence is faulty, somewhat in the same manner with the last. It is loose in the connection of its parts ; and, besides this, it is also too loosely connected with the preceding sentence. What he had there said concerning the Saxons expelling the Britons, and changing the customs, the religion, and the language of the country, is a clear and good reason for our present language being Saxon rather than British. This is the inference which we would naturally expect him to draw from the premises just before laid down : but when he tells us, that “ this is the reason why there are more Latin words remaining in the British tongue than in the old Saxon,” we are presently at a stand. No reason for this inference appears. If it can be gathered at all from the foregoing deduction, it is gathered only imperfectly. For as he had told us, that the Britons had *some* connection with the Romans, he should have also told us, in order to make out his inference, that the Saxons never had *any*. The truth is, the whole of this paragraph, concerning the influence of the Latin tongue upon ours, is careless, perplexed, and obscure. His argument required to have been more fully unfolded, in order to make it be distinctly apprehended, and to

give it its due force. In the next paragraph he proceeds to discourse concerning the influence of the French tongue upon our language. The style becomes more clear, though not remarkable for great beauty or elegance.

“ Edward the Confessor, having lived long in
“ France, appears to be the first who introduced
“ any mixture of the French tongue with the
“ Saxon ; the court affecting what the prince was
“ fond of, and others taking it up for a fashion,
“ as it is now with us. William the Conqueror
“ proceeded much further, bringing over with him
“ vast numbers of that nation, scattering them in
“ every monastery, giving them great quantities
“ of land, directing all pleadings to be in that lan-
“ guage, and endeavouring to make it universal
“ in the kingdom.”

On these two sentences, I have nothing of moment to observe. The sense is brought out clearly, and in simple unaffected language.

“ This, at least, is the opinion generally re-
“ ceived ; but your Lordship hath fully convinced
“ me, that the French tongue made yet a greater
“ progress here under Harry the Second, who had
“ large territories on that continent both from his
“ father and his wife ; made frequent journeys
“ and expeditions thither ; and was always at-
“ tended with a number of his countrymen, re-
“ tainers at court.”

In the beginning of this sentence, our author states an opposition between an opinion generally received, and that of his Lordship ; and in compliment to his patron, he tells us, that his Lordship had convinced him of somewhat that differed from the general opinion. Thus one must naturally understand his words : “ This, at least, is the opinion “ generally received ; but your Lordship hath fully “ convinced me.” Now here there must be inaccuracy of expression. For, on examining what went before, there appears no sort of opposition betwixt the generally received opinion, and that of the author’s patron. The general opinion was, that William the Conqueror had proceeded much farther than Edward the Confessor, in propagating the French language, and had endeavoured to make it universal. Lord Oxford’s opinion was, that the French tongue had gone on to make a yet greater progress under Harry the Second, than it had done under his predecessor William : which two opinions are as entirely consistent with each other as any can be ; and, therefore, the opposition here affected to be stated between them, by the adversative particle *but*, was improper and groundless.

“ For some centuries after, there was a constant
“ intercourse between France and England, by the
“ dominions we possessed there, and the conquest
“ we made ; so that our language, between two
“ and three hundred years ago, seems to have had
“ a greater mixture with French than at present ;
“ many words having been afterwards rejected,

" and some since the days of Spenser; although " we have still retained not a few, which have " been long antiquated in France."

This is a sentence too long and intricate, and liable to the same objection that was made to a former one, of the want of unity. It consists of four members, each divided from the subsequent by a semicolon. In going along, we naturally expect the sentence is to end at the second of these, or, at farthest, at the third; when, to our surprise, a new member of the period makes its appearance, and fatigues our attention in joining all the parts together. Such a structure of a sentence is always the mark of careless writing. In the first member of the sentence, " a constant intercourse between " France and England, by the dominions we pos- " sessed there, and the conquests we made," the construction is not sufficiently filled up. In place of " intercourse by the dominions we possessed," it should have been, " by reason of the dominions we " possessed;" or " occasioned by the dominions we " possessed," and in place of " the dominions we " possessed there, and the conquests we made," the regular style is, " the dominions which we possessed " there, and the conquests which we made." The relative pronoun *which*, is, indeed, in phrases of this kind sometimes omitted. But when it is omitted, the style becomes elliptic; and though in conversation, or in the very light and easy kinds of writings, such elliptic style may not be improper, yet in grave and regular writing, it is better to fill

up the construction, and insert the relative pronoun. After having said, “ I could produce several instances of both kinds, if it were of any use or entertainment,” our author begins the next paragraph thus :

“ To examine into the several circumstances by which the language of a country may be altered, would force me to enter into a wide field.”

There is nothing remarkable in this sentence, unless that here occurs the first instance of a metaphor since the beginning of this treatise ; “ entering into a wide field,” being put for beginning an extensive subject. Few writers deal less in figurative language than Swift. I before observed, that he appears to despise ornaments of this kind ; and though this renders his style somewhat dry on serious subjects, yet his plainness and simplicity, I must not forbear to remind my readers, is far preferable to an ostentatious and affected parade of ornament.

“ I shall only observe, that the Latin, the French, and the English, seem to have undergone the same fortune. The first, from the days of Romulus to those of Julius Cæsar, suffered perpetual changes ; and by what we meet in those authors who occasionally speak on that subject, as well as from certain fragments of old laws, it is manifest, that the Latin, three hundred years before Tully, was as unintelligible in his time, as the French and English of the same period are

“ now ; and these two have changed as much since
“ William the Conqueror, (which is but little less
“ than seven hundred years) as the Latin appears
“ to have done in the like term.”

The Dean plainly appears to be writing negligently here. This sentence is one of that involved and intricate kind, of which some instances have occurred before, but none worse than this. It requires a very distinct head to comprehend the whole meaning of the period at first reading. In one part of it we find extreme carelessness of expression. He says, “it is manifest that the Latin, “ three hundred years before Tully, was as unin-
“ telligible in his time, as the English and French
“ of the same period are now.” By the English and French “of the same period,” must naturally be understood “the English and French that were
“ spoken three hundred years before Tully.” This is the only grammatical meaning his words will bear; and yet assuredly what he means, and what it would have been easy for him to have expressed with more precision, is, “the English and French
“ that were spoken three hundred years ago,” or at a period equally distant from our age, as the old Latin, which he had mentioned, was from the age of Tully. But when an author writes hastily, and does not review with proper care what he has written, many such inaccuracies will be apt to creep into his style.

“ Whether our language or the French will de-
“ cline as fast as the Roman did, is a question that

“ would perhaps admit more debate than it is worth.
“ There were many reasons for the corruptions of
“ the last; as the change of their government to a
“ tyranny, which ruined the study of eloquence,
“ there being no farther use or encouragement for
“ popular orators; their giving not only the free-
“ dom of the city, but capacity for employments,
“ to several towns in Gaul, Spain, and Germany,
“ and other distant parts, as far as Asia, which
“ brought a great number of foreign pretenders to
“ Rome; the slavish disposition of the senate and
“ people, by which the wit and eloquence of the
“ age were wholly turned into panegyric, the most
“ barren of all subjects; the great corruption of
“ manners, and introduction of foreign luxury, with
“ foreign terms to express it, with several others
“ that might be assigned; not to mention the in-
“ vasion from the Goths and Vandals, which are
“ too obvious to insist on.”

In the enumeration here made of the causes contributing towards the corruption of the Roman language, there are many inaccuracies; “ The “ change of their government to a tyranny,”—of whose government? He had, indeed, been speaking of the Roman language, and, therefore, we guess at his meaning; but the style is ungrammatical; for he had not mentioned the Romans themselves; and, therefore, when he says “ their go-“ vernment,” there is no antecedent in the sentence to which the pronoun *their* can refer with any propriety. “ Giving the capacity for employ-

"ments to several towns in Gaul," is a questionable expression. For though towns are sometimes put for the people to inhabit them, yet to give a town the "capacity for employments," sounds harsh and uncouth. "The wit and eloquence of "the age wholly turned into panegyric," is a phrase which does not well express the meaning. Neither wit nor eloquence can be turned into panegyric; but they may be turned *towards panegyric*, or *employed in panegyric*, which was the sense the author had in view.

The conclusion of the enumeration is visibly incorrect, "The great corruption of manners, and in- " "introduction of foreign luxury, with foreign terms to " "express it, with several others that might be assign- " "ed." He means with *several other reasons*. The word *reasons* had, indeed, been mentioned before; but as it stands at the distance of thirteen lines back- ward, the repetition of it here became indispensable, in order to avoid ambiguity. Not to mention, he adds, "the invasions from the Goths and Vandals, " "which are too obvious to insist on." One would imagine him to mean, that the invasions from the Goths and Vandals are *historical facts* too well known and obvious to be insisted on. But he means quite a different thing, though he has not taken the proper method of expressing it, through his haste, probably, to finish the paragraph; namely, that these invasions from the Goths and Vandals "were causes of the corruption of the " "Roman language too obvious to be insisted on."

I shall not pursue this criticism any farther. I have been obliged to point out many inaccuracies in the passage which we have considered. But in order that my observations may not be construed as meant to depreciate the style or the writings of Dean Swift below their just value, there are two remarks, which I judge it necessary to make before concluding this Lecture. One is, that it were unfair to estimate an author's style on the whole, by some passage in his writings, which chances to be composed in a careless manner. This is the case with respect to this treatise, which has much the appearance of a hasty production; though, as I before observed, it was by no means on that account that I pitched upon it for the subject of this exercise. But after having examined it, I am sensible that, in many other of his writings, the Dean is more accurate.

My other observation, which is equally applicable to Dean Swift and Mr Addison, is, that there may be writers much freer from such inaccuracies as I have had occasion to point out in these two, whose style, however, upon the whole, may not have half their merit. Refinement in language has, of late years, begun to be much attended to. In several modern productions of very small value, I should find it difficult to point out many errors in language. The words might, probably, be all proper words, correctly and clearly arranged, and the turn of the sentence sonorous

and musical ; whilst yet the style, upon the whole, might deserve no praise. The fault often lies in what may be called the general cast or complexion of the style ; which a person of a good taste discerns to be vicious ; to be feeble, for instance, and diffuse ; flimsy or affected ; petulant or ostentatious ; though the faults cannot be so easily pointed out and particularised, as when they lie in some erroneous or negligent construction of a sentence. Whereas, such writers as Addison and Swift carry always those general characters of good style, which, in the midst of their occasional negligences, every person of good taste must discern and approve. We see their faults overbalanced by higher beauties. We see a writer of sense and reflection expressing his sentiments without affectation ; attentive to thoughts as well as to words ; and, in the main current of his language, elegant and beautiful ; and, therefore, the only proper use to be made of the blemishes which occur in the writings of such authors, is to point out to those who apply themselves to the study of composition, some of the rules which they ought to observe for avoiding such errors ; and to render them sensible of the necessity of strict attention to language and to style. Let them imitate the ease and simplicity of those great authors ; let them study to be always natural, and, as far as they can, always correct in their expressions ; let them endeavour to be, at some times, lively and striking ; but carefully avoid being at any time ostentatious and affected.

LECTURE XXV.

ELOQUENCE, OR PUBLIC SPEAKING—HISTORY OF ELOQUENCE—GRECIAN ELOQUENCE—DEMOSTHENES.

HAVING finished that part of the course which relates to language and style, we are now to ascend a step higher, and to examine the subjects upon which style is employed. I begin with what is properly called eloquence, or public speaking. In treating of this, I am to consider the different kinds and subjects of public speaking; the manner suited to each; the proper distribution and management of all the parts of a discourse; and the proper pronunciation or delivery of it. But before I enter on any of these heads, it may be proper to take a view of the nature of eloquence in general, and of the state in which it has subsisted in different ages and countries. This will lead into some detail; but I hope an useful one; as in every art it is of great consequence to have a just idea of the perfection of that art, of the end at which it aims, and of the progress which it has made among mankind.

Of eloquence, in particular, it is the more necessary to ascertain the proper notion, because there is not any thing concerning which false notions have been more prevalent. Hence, it has been so often, and is still at this day, in disrepute with many. When you speak to a plain man of eloquence, or in praise of it, he is apt to hear you with very little attention. He conceives eloquence to signify a certain trick of speech ; the art of varnishing weak arguments plausibly ; or of speaking so as to please and tickle the ear. “ Give me “ good sense,” says he, “ and keep your eloquence “ for boys.” He is in the right, if eloquence were what he conceives it to be. It would be then a very contemptible art indeed, below the study of any wise or good man. But nothing can be more remote from truth. To be truly eloquent, is to speak to the purpose. For the best definition which, I think, can be given of eloquence, is the art of speaking in such a manner as to attain the end for which we speak. Whenever a man speaks or writes, he is supposed, as a rational being, to have some end in view ; either to inform, or to amuse, or to persuade, or, in some way or other, to act upon his fellow creatures. He who speaks, or writes, in such a manner as to adapt all his words most effectually to that end, is the most eloquent man. Whatever then the subject be, there is room for eloquence ; in history, or even in philosophy, as well as in orations. The definition which I have given of eloquence, comprehends all the dif-

ferent kinds of it; whether calculated to instruct, to persuade, or to please. But, as the most important subject of discourse is action, or conduct, the power of eloquence chiefly appears when it is employed to influence conduct, and persuade to action. As it is principally with reference to this end that it becomes the object of art, eloquence may, under this view of it, be defined, *the art of persuasion.*

This being once established, certain consequences immediately follow, which point out the fundamental maxims of the art. It follows clearly, that, in order to persuade, the most essential requisites are, solid argument, clear method, a character of probity appearing in the speaker, joined with such graces of style and utterance, as shall draw our attention to what he says. Good sense is the foundation of all. No man can be truly eloquent without it; for fools can persuade none but fools. In order to persuade a man of sense, you must first convince him; which is only to be done by satisfying his understanding of the reasonableness of what you propose to him.

This leads me to observe, that convincing and persuading, though they are sometimes confounded, import, notwithstanding, different things, which it is necessary for us, at present, to distinguish from each other. Conviction affects the understanding only; persuasion, the will and the practice. It is

the business of the philosopher to convince me of truth ; it is the business of the orator to persuade me to act agreeably to it, by engaging my affections on its side. Conviction and persuasion do not always go together. They *ought*, indeed, to go together ; and *would* do so, if our inclination regularly followed the dictates of our understanding. But as our nature is constituted, I may be convinced, that virtue, justice, or public spirit, are laudable, while, at the same time, I am not persuaded to act according to them. The inclination may revolt, though the understanding be satisfied ; the passions may prevail against the judgment. Conviction is, however, always one avenue to the inclination or heart ; and it is that which an orator must first bend his strength to gain : for no persuasion is likely to be stable, which is not founded on conviction. But, in order to persuade, the orator must go farther than merely producing conviction ; he must consider man as a creature moved by many different springs, and must act upon them all. He must address himself to the passions ; he must paint to the fancy, and touch the heart ; and hence, besides solid argument and clear method, all the conciliating and interesting arts, both of composition and pronunciation, enter into the idea of eloquence.

An objection may, perhaps, hence be formed against eloquence, as an art which may be employed for persuading to ill, as well as to good.

There is no doubt that it may ; and so reasoning may also be, and too often is employed, for leading men into error. But who would think of forming an argument from this against the cultivation of our reasoning powers ? Reason, eloquence, and every art which ever has been studied among mankind, may be abused, and may prove dangerous in the hands of bad men; but it were perfectly childish to contend, that, upon this account, they ought to be abolished. Give truth and virtue the same arms which you give to vice and falsehood, and the former are likely to prevail. Eloquence is no invention of the schools. Nature teaches every man to be eloquent, when he is much in earnest. Place him in some critical situation ; let him have some great interest at stake, and you will see him lay hold of the most effectual means of persuasion. The art of oratory proposes nothing more than to follow out that track which nature has first pointed out. And the more exactly that this track is pursued, the more that eloquence is properly studied, the more shall we be guarded against the abuse which bad men make of it, and enabled the better to distinguish between true eloquence and the tricks of sophistry.

We may distinguish three kinds or degrees of eloquence. The first, and lowest, is that which aims only at pleasing the hearers. Such, generally, is the eloquence of panegyrics, inaugural orations, addresses to great men, and other harangues of this

sort. This ornamental sort of composition is not altogether to be rejected. It may innocently amuse and entertain the mind ; and it may be mixed, at the same time, with very useful sentiments. But it must be confessed, that where the speaker has no farther aim than merely to shine and to please, there is great danger of art being strained into ostentation, and of the composition becoming tiresome and languid.

A second and higher degree of eloquence is, when the speaker aims not merely to please, but also to inform, to instruct, to convince ; when his art is exerted in removing prejudices against himself and his cause, in choosing the most proper arguments, stating them with the greatest force, arranging them in the best order, expressing and delivering them with propriety and beauty ; and thereby disposing us to pass that judgment, or embrace that side of the cause to which he seeks to bring us. Within this compass, chiefly, is employed the eloquence of the bar.

But there is a third, and still higher degree of eloquence, wherein a greater power is exerted over the human mind ; by which we are not only convinced, but are interested, agitated, and carried along with the speaker; our passions are made to rise together with his; we enter into all his emotions; we love, we detest, we resent, according as he inspires us; and are prompted to re-

solve, or to act with vigour and warmth. Debate in popular assemblies, opens the most illustrious field to this species of eloquence ; and the pulpit, also, admits it.

I am here to observe, and the observation is of consequence, that the high eloquence which I have last mentioned, is always the offspring of passion. By passion, I mean that state of the mind in which it is agitated and fired, by some object it has in view. A man may convince, and even persuade others to act, by mere reason and argument. But that degree of eloquence which gains the admiration of mankind, and properly denominates one an orator, is never found without warmth or passion. Passion, when in such a degree as to rouse and kindle the mind, without throwing it out of the possession of itself, is universally found to exalt all the human powers. It renders the mind infinitely more enlightened, more penetrating, more vigorous and masterly, than it is in its calm moments. A man, actuated by a strong passion, becomes much greater than he is at other times. He is conscious of more strength and force; he utters greater sentiments, conceives higher designs, and executes them with a boldness and a felicity, of which, on other occasions, he could not think himself capable. But chiefly, with respect to persuasion, is the power of passion felt. Almost every man, in passion, is eloquent. Then, he is at no loss for words and arguments. He transmits to others, by

a sort of contagious sympathy, the warm sentiments which he feels : his looks and gestures are all persuasive ; and nature here shews herself infinitely more powerful than art. This is the foundation of that just and noted rule : “ *Si vis me flere, dolendum est primum ipsi tibi.*”

This principle being once admitted, that all high eloquence flows from passion, several consequences follow, which deserve to be attended to ; and the mention of which will serve to confirm the principle itself. For hence the universally acknowledged effect of enthusiasm, or warmth of any kind, in public speakers, for affecting their audience. Hence all laboured declamation, and affected ornaments of style, which shew the mind to be cool and unmoved, are so inconsistent with persuasive eloquence. Hence all studied prettinesses, in gesture or pronunciation, detract so greatly from the weight of a speaker. Hence a discourse that is read, moves us less than one that is spoken, as having less the appearance of coming warm from the heart. Hence, to call a man cold, is the same thing as to say that he is not eloquent. Hence a sceptical man, who is always in suspense, and feels nothing strongly ; or a cunning mercenary man, who is suspected rather to assume the appearance of passion than to feel it; have so little power over men in public speaking. Hence, in fine, the necessity of being, and being believed to be, disinterested, and in earnest, in order to persuade.

These are some of the capital ideas which have occurred to me, concerning eloquence in general ; and with which I have thought proper to begin, as the foundation of much of what I am afterwards to suggest. From what I have already said, it is evident that eloquence is a high talent, and of great importance in society ; and that it requires both natural genius, and much improvement from art. Viewed as the art of persuasion, it requires, in its lowest state, soundness of understanding, and considerable acquaintance with human nature ; and, in its higher degrees, it requires, moreover, strong sensibility of mind, a warm and lively imagination, joined with correctness of judgment, and an extensive command of the power of language, to which must also be added, the graces of pronunciation and delivery.—Let us next proceed to consider in what state eloquence has subsisted in different ages and nations.

It is an observation made by several writers, that eloquence is to be looked for only in free states. Longinus, in particular, at the end of his treatise on the sublime, when assigning the reason why so little sublimity of genius appeared in the age wherein he lived, illustrates this observation with a great deal of beauty. Liberty, he remarks, is the nurse of true genius ; it animates the spirit, and invigorates the hopes of men ; excites honourable emulation, and a desire of excelling in every art. All other qualifications, he says, you may find among

those who are deprived of liberty ; but never did a slave become an orator ; he can only be a pompous flatterer. Now, though this reasoning be, in the main, true ; it must, however, be understood with some limitations. For, under arbitrary governments, if they be of the civilized kind, and give encouragements to the arts, ornamented eloquence may flourish remarkably. Witness France at this day, where, ever since the reign of Louis XIV. more of what may be justly called eloquence, within a certain sphere, is to be found, than, perhaps, in any other nation in Europe ; though freedom be enjoyed by some nations in a much greater degree. The French sermons, and orations pronounced on public occasions, are not only polite and elegant harangues, but several of them are uncommonly spirited, are animated with bold figures, and rise to a degree of the sublime. Their eloquence, however, in general, must be confessed to be of the flowery, rather than the vigorous kind ; calculated more to please and soothe, than to convince and persuade. High, manly, and forcible eloquence is, indeed, to be looked for only, or chiefly, in the regions of freedom. Under arbitrary governments, besides the general turn of softness and effeminacy which such governments may be justly supposed to give to the spirit of a nation, the art of speaking cannot be such an instrument of ambition, business, and power, as it is in democratical states. It is confined within a narrower range ; it can be employed

only in the pulpit, or at the bar ; but is excluded from those great scenes of public business, where the spirits of men have the freest exertion ; where important affairs are transacted, and persuasion, of course, is more seriously studied. Wherever man can acquire most power over man by means of reason and discourse, which certainly is under a free state of government, there we may naturally expect that true eloquence will be best understood, and carried to the greatest height.

Hence, in tracing the rise of oratory, we need not attempt to go far back into the early ages of the world, or search for it among the monuments of Eastern or Egyptian antiquity. In those ages, there was, indeed, an eloquence of a certain kind ; but it approached nearer to poetry, than to what we properly call oratory. There is reason to believe, as I formerly shewed, that the language of the first ages was passionate and metaphorical ; owing partly to the scanty stock of words of which speech then consisted ; and partly to the tincture which language naturally takes from the savage and uncultivated state of men, agitated by unrestrained passions, and struck by events, which to them are strange and surprising. In this state, rapture and enthusiasm, the parents of poetry, had an ample field. But while the intercourse of men was as yet unfrequent, and force and strength were the chief means employed in deciding controversies, the arts of oratory and persuasion, of rea-

soning and debate, could be but little known. The first empires that arose, the Assyrian and Egyptian, were of the despotic kind. The whole power was in the hands of one, or at most of a few. The multitude were accustomed to a blind reverence ; they were led, not persuaded : and none of those refinements of society, which make public speaking an object of importance, were as yet introduced.

It is not till the rise of the Grecian republics, that we find any remarkable appearances of eloquence as the art of persuasion ; and these gave it such a field as it never had before, and perhaps has never had again since that time. And, therefore, as the Grecian eloquence has ever been the object of admiration to those who have studied the powers of speech, it is necessary that we fix our attention for a little on this period.

Greece was divided into a multitude of petty states. These were governed, at first, by kings, who were called tyrants ; on whose expulsion from all these states, there sprung up a great number of democratical governments, founded nearly on the same plan, animated by the same high spirit of freedom, mutually jealous, and rivals of one another. We may compute the flourishing period of those Grecian states, to have lasted from the battle of Marathon, till the time of Alexander the Great, who subdued the liberties of Greece ; a

period which comprehends about 150 years, and within which are to be found most of their celebrated poets and philosophers, but chiefly their orators ; for though poetry and philosophy were not extinct among them after that period, yet eloquence hardly made any figure.

Of these Grecian republics, the most noted by far for eloquence, and, indeed, for arts of every kind, was that of Athens. The Athenians were an ingenious, quick, sprightly people ; practised in business, and sharpened by frequent and sudden revolutions, which happened in their government. The genius of their government was altogether democratical ; their legislature consisted of the whole body of the people. They had, indeed, a senate of five hundred ; but in the general convention of the citizens was placed the last resort ; and affairs were conducted there, entirely, by reasoning, speaking, and a skilful application to the passions and interests of a popular assembly. There laws were made, peace and war decreed, and thence the magistrates were chosen. For the highest honours of the state were alike open to all ; nor was the meanest tradesmen excluded from a seat in their supreme courts. In such a state, eloquence, it is obvious, would be much studied, as the surest means of rising to influence and power ; and what sort of eloquence ? Not that which was brilliant merely, and showy, but that which was found, upon trial, to be most effectual for con-

vincing, interesting, and persuading the hearers. For there, public speaking was not a mere competition for empty applause, but a serious contention for that public leading, which was the great object both of the men of ambition, and the men of virtue.

In so enlightened and acute a nation, where the highest attention was paid to every thing elegant in the arts, we may naturally expect to find the public taste refined and judicious. Accordingly, it was improved to such a degree, that the Attic taste and Attic manner have passed into a proverb. It is true, that ambitious demagogues, and corrupt orators, did sometimes dazzle and mislead the people, by a showy but false eloquence; for the Athenians, with all their acuteness, were factious and giddy, and great admirers of every novelty. But when some important interest drew their attention, when any great danger roused them, and put their judgment to a serious trial, they commonly distinguished, very justly, between genuine and spurious eloquence: and hence Demosthenes triumphed over all his opponents; because he spoke always to the purpose, affected no insignificant parade of words, used weighty arguments, and shewed them clearly where their interest lay. In critical conjunctures of the state, when the public was alarmed with some pressing danger, when the people were assembled, and proclamation was made by the crier, for any one to rise and deliver his

opinion upon the present situation of affairs, empty declamation and sophistical reasoning would not only have been hissed, but resented and punished by an assembly so intelligent, and accustomed to business. Their greatest orators trembled on such occasions, when they rose to address the people, as they knew they were to be held answerable for the issue of the counsel which they gave. The most liberal endowments of the greatest princes never could find such a school for true oratory, as was formed by the nature of the Athenian republic. Eloquence there sprung, native and vigorous, from amidst the contentions of faction and freedom, of public business, and of active life; and not from that retirement and speculation, which we are apt sometimes to fancy more favourable to eloquence than they are found to be.

Pisistratus, who was contemporary with Solon, and subverted his plan of government, is mentioned by Plutarch, as the first who distinguished himself among the Athenians by application to the arts of speech. His ability in these arts he employed for raising himself to the sovereign power; which, however, when he had attained it, he exercised with moderation. Of the orators who flourished between his time and the Peloponnesian war, no particular mention is made in history. Pericles, who died about the beginning of that war, was properly the first who carried eloquence to a great height; to such a height, indeed, that it does not

appear he was ever afterwards surpassed. He was more than an orator; he was also a statesman and a general; expert in business, and of consummate address. Forty years he governed Athens with absolute sway; and historians ascribe his influence, not more to his political talents than to his eloquence, which was of that forcible and vehement kind, that bore every thing before it, and triumphed over the passions and affections of the people. Hence he had the surname of Olympias given him: and it was said, that, like Jupiter, he thundered when he spoke. Though his ambition be liable to censure, yet he was distinguished for several virtues; and it was the confidence which the people reposed in his integrity, that gave such a powerful effect to his eloquence. He appears to have been generous, magnanimous, and public-spirited; he raised no fortune to himself; he expended, indeed, great sums of the public money, but chiefly on public works; and, at his death, is said to have valued himself principally on having never obliged any citizen to wear mourning on his account, during his long administration. It is a remarkable particular, recorded of Pericles by Sudas, that he was the first Athenian who composed, and put into writing, a discourse designed for the public.

Posterior to Pericles, in the course of the Peloponnesian war, arose Cleon, Alcibiades, Critias, and Theramenes, eminent citizens of Athens, who were all distinguished for their eloquence. They

were not orators by profession ; they were not formed by schools, but by a much more powerful education, that of business and debate ; where man sharpened man, and civil affairs, carried on by public speaking, brought every power of the mind into action. The manner or style of oratory which then prevailed, we learn from the orations in the History of Thucydides, who also flourished in the same age. It was manly, vehement, and concise, even to some degree of obscurity. “Grandes
“ erant verbis,” says Cicero, “crebri sententiis,
“ compressione rerum breves, et, ob eam ipsam
“ causam, interdum sub obscuri *.” A manner very different from what, in modern times, we would conceive to be the style of popular oratory ; and which tends to give a high idea of the acuteness of those audiences to which they spoke.

The power of eloquence having, after the days of Pericles, become an object of greater consequence than ever, this gave birth to a set of men till then unknown, called Rhetoricians, and sometimes Sophists, who arose in multitudes during the Peloponnesian war ; such as Protagoras, Prodigas, Thrasymus, and one who was more eminent than all the rest, Gorgias of Leontium. These sophists joined to their art of rhetoric a subtle logic, and

* “ They were magnificent in their expressions ; they abounded in thought ; they compressed their matter into few words ; and, by their brevity, were sometimes obscure.”

were generally a sort of metaphysical sceptics. Gorgias, however, was a professed master of eloquence only. His reputation was prodigious. He was highly venerated in Leontium of Sicily, his native city, and money was coined with his name upon it. In the latter part of his life, he established himself at Athens, and lived till he had attained the age of 105 years. Hermogenes (*de Ideis*, l. ii. cap. 9.) has preserved a fragment of his, from which we see his style and manner. It is extremely quaint and artificial; full of antithesis and pointed expression; and shows how far the Grecian subtilty had already carried the study of language. These rhetoricians did not content themselves with delivering general instructions concerning eloquence to their pupils, and endeavouring to form their taste; but they professed the art of giving them receipts for making all sorts of orations; and of teaching them how to speak for and against every cause whatever. Upon this plan, they were the first who treated of common places, and the artificial invention of arguments and topics for every subject. In the hands of such men, we may easily believe that oratory would degenerate from the masculine strain it had hitherto held, and become a trifling and sophistical art; and we may justly deem them the first corrupters of true eloquence. To them the great Socrates opposed himself. By a profound, but simple reasoning, peculiar to himself, he exploded their sophistry, and endeavoured to recal men's attention

from that abuse of reasoning and discourse which began to be in vogue, to natural language, and sound and useful thought.

In the same age, though somewhat later than the philosopher above mentioned, flourished Isocrates, whose writings are still extant. He was a professed rhetorician, and by teaching eloquence, he acquired both a great fortune, and higher fame than any of his rivals in that profession. No contemptible orator he was. His orations are full of morality and good sentiments, they are flowing and smooth, but too destitute of vigour. He never engaged in public affairs, nor pleaded causes; and accordingly his orations are calculated only for the shade : “Pompæ,” Cicero allows, “magis quam pugnæ aptior; ad voluptatem aurium ac commodatus potius quam ad judiciorum certamen *.” The style of Gorgias of Leontium was formed into short sentences, composed generally of two members balanced against each other. The style of Isocrates, on the contrary, is swelling and full; and he is said to be the first who introduced the method of composing in regular periods, which had a studied music and harmonious cadence; a manner which he has carried to a vicious excess. What shall we think of an orator, who employed ten years in composing one discourse, still extant,

* “ More fitted for shew than for debate ; better calculated for the amusement of an audience, than for judicial contests.”

entitled the Panegyric? How much frivolous care must have been bestowed on all the minute elegance of words and sentences? Dionysius of Halicarnassus has given us upon the orations of Isocrates, as also upon those of some other Greek orators, a full and regular treatise, which is, in my opinion, one of the most judicious pieces of ancient criticism extant, and very worthy of being consulted. He commends the splendour of Isocrates's style, and the morality of his sentiments; but severely censures his affectation, and the uniform regular cadence of all his sentences. He holds him to be a florid declaimer; not a natural persuasive speaker. Cicero, in his critical works, though he admits his failings, yet discovers a propensity to be very favourable to that “plena ac numerosa oratio,” that swelling and musical style which Isocrates introduced, and with the love of which Cicero himself was, perhaps, somewhat infected. In one of his treatises (*Orat. ad M. Brut.*) he informs us, that his friend Brutus and he differed in this particular, and that Brutus found fault with his partiality to Isocrates. The manner of Isocrates generally catches young people, when they begin to attend to composition; and it is very natural that it should do so. It gives them an idea of that regularity, cadence, and magnificence of style, which fills the ear; but when they come to write or speak for the world, they will find this ostentatious manner unfit, either for carrying on business, or commanding attention. It is said, that the high repu-

tation of Isocrates prompted Aristotle, who was nearly his contemporary, or lived but a little after him, to write his Institutions of Rhetoric, which are indeed formed upon a plan of eloquence very different from that of Isocrates and the rhetoricians of that time. He seems to have had it in view to direct the attention of orators much more towards convincing and affecting their hearers, than towards the musical cadence of periods.

Isæus and Lysias, some of whose orations are preserved, belong also to this period. Lysias was somewhat earlier than Isocrates, and is the model of that manner which the ancients call the “Tenuis “vel subtilis.” He has none of Isocrates’s pomp. He is everywhere pure and attic in the highest degree; simple and unaffected; but wants force, and is sometimes frigid in his compositions*. Isæus

* In the judicious comparison which Dionysius of Halicarnassus makes of the merits of Lysias and Isocrates, he ascribes to Lysias, as the distinguishing character of his manner, a certain grace or elegance arising from simplicity: “Πεφοκε γαρ ή Δυσις “λεξις εχει το Χαριν. ή δΙσκρητας βιβεται.” “The style of “Lysias has gracefulness for its nature; that of Isocrates seeks “to have it.” In the art of narration, as distinct, probable, and persuasive, he holds Lysias to be superior to all orators; at the same time, he admits that his composition is more adapted to private litigation than to great subjects. He convinces, but he does not elevate nor animate. The magnificence and splendour of Isocrates is more suited to great occasions. He is more agreeable

is chiefly remarkable for being the master of the great Demosthenes, in whom, it must be acknowledged, eloquence shone forth with higher splen-

than Lysias ; and, in dignity of sentiment, far excels him. With regard to the affectation which is visible in Isocrates's manner, he concludes what he says of it with the following excellent observations, which should never be forgotten by any who aspire to be true orators : “ Τῆς μενος ἀγωλῆς ταυ περιοδῶν το κυκλίου και των σχηματισμῶν τη λέξεως το μερακιῶν, ωκ ἐδοκιμαζον δύλευε γαρ η διανοια πολλαχις των ευθμων τη λέξεως, και τη κομψε λειπεται τα ἀληθινον. κρατισον τ' επιτηδευμα εν διαλεκτω πολιτικη, και ἔγαγων, το ὄμοιοτατον τω κατα Φυσι. βελεται δε η Φυσις τοις γονηρεσσιν επειδαι την λεξιν, οτη λεξει τα γονιατα συμβολω δε δη περι πολεμει και ειρηνα λεγοντι και ιδιατη του περι ψυχης τρεχοντι κινδυνον εν δικασαις, τα κορεψα, και θεατρικα, και μερα κινδυνω ταυτι οτη οιδα ήτια δυνατ' αν παραχειν αφιλισαν μελλον δοιδη οτη και βλαβης αν αιτια γενοιτο. καριετισμος γαρ πᾶς εν σπιθη, και καλως γινομενος, ἀωρον πραγμα και πολεμωτα τον ἑλεω” Judic. de Isocrat. p. 558. “ His studied circumflexion of periods, and juvenile affectation of the flowers of speech, I do not approve. The thought is frequently made subservient to the music of the sentence ; and elegance is preferred to reason : whereas, in every discourse, where business and affairs are concerned, nature ought to be followed ; and nature certainly dictates that the expression should be an object subordinate to the sense, not the sense to the expression. When one rises to give public council concerning war and peace, or takes the charge of a private man, who is standing at the bar, to be tried for his life, those studied decorations, those theatrical graces and juvenile flowers, are out of place. Instead of being of service, they are detrimental to the cause we espouse. When the contest is of a serious kind, ornaments, which at another time would have beauty, then lose their effect, and prove hostile to the affections which we wish to raise in our hearers.”

dour than perhaps any that ever bore the name of an orator, and whose manner and character, therefore, must deserve our particular attention.

I shall not spend any time upon the circumstances of Demosthenes's life; they are well known. The strong ambition which he discovered to excel in the art of speaking; the unsuccessfulness of his first attempts; his unwearied perseverance in surmounting all the disadvantages that arose from his person and address; his shutting himself up in a cave, that he might study with less distraction; his declaiming by the sea-shore, that he might accustom himself to the noise of a tumultuous assembly, and with pebbles in his mouth, that he might correct a defect in his speech; his practising at home, with a naked sword hanging over his shoulder, that he might check an ungraceful motion, to which he was subject; all those circumstances, which we learn from Plutarch, are very encouraging to such as study eloquence, as they shew how far art and application may avail, for acquiring an excellence which nature seemed unwilling to grant us.

Despising the affected and florid manner which the rhetoricians of that age followed, Demosthenes returned to the forcible and manly eloquence of Pericles; and strength and vehemence form the principal characteristics of his style. Never had orator a finer field than Demosthenes, in his Olyn-

thiaes and Philippics, which are his capital orations ; and, no doubt, to the nobleness of the subject, and to that integrity and public spirit which eminently breathe in them, they are indebted for much of their merit. The subject is, to rouse the indignation of his countrymen against Philip of Macedon, the public enemy of the liberties of Greece ; and to guard them against the insidious measures, by which that crafty prince endeavoured to lay them asleep to danger. In the prosecution of this end, we see him taking every proper method to animate a people, renowned for justice, humanity, and valour, but in many instances become corrupt and degenerate. He boldly taxes them with their venality, their indolence, and indifference to the public cause ; while, at the same time, with all the art of an orator, he recalls the glory of their ancestors to their thoughts, shews them that they are still a flourishing and a powerful people, the natural protectors of the liberty of Greece, and who wanted only the inclination to exert themselves, in order to make Philip tremble. With his contemporary orators, who were in Philip's interest, and who persuaded the people to peace, he keeps no measures, but plainly reproaches them as the betrayers of their country. He not only prompts to vigorous conduct, but he lays down the plan of that conduct ; he enters into particulars ; and points out, with great exactness, the measures of execution. This is the strain of these orations. They are strongly animated, and full of

the impetuosity and fire of public spirit. They proceed in a continued train of inductions, consequences, and demonstrations, founded on sound reason. The figures which he uses, are never sought after; but always rise from the subject. He employs them sparingly, indeed; for splendour and ornament are not the distinctions of this orator's composition. It is an energy of thought peculiar to himself, which forms his character, and sets him above all others. He appears to attend much more to things than to words. We forget the orator, and think of the business. He warms the mind, and impels to action. He has no parade and ostentation; no methods of insinuation; no laboured introductions; but is like a man full of his subject, who, after preparing his audience by a sentence or two for hearing plain truths, enters directly on business.

Demosthenes appears to great advantage, when contrasted with Æschines in the celebrated Oration “*pro Corona*.” Æschines was his rival in business, and personal enemy; and one of the most distinguished orators of that age. But when we read the two orations, Æschines is feeble in comparison of Demosthenes, and makes much less impression on the mind. His reasonings concerning the law that was in question, are indeed very subtle; but his invective against Demosthenes is general and ill supported. Whereas Demosthenes is a torrent, that nothing can resist. He bears

down his antagonist with violence ; he draws his character in the strongest colours ; and the particular merit of that oration is, that all the descriptions in it are highly picturesque. There runs through it a strain of magnanimity and high honour ; the orator speaks with that strength and conscious dignity which great actions and public spirit alone inspire. Both orators use great liberties with one another ; and, in general, that unrestrained license which ancient manners permitted, and which was carried by public speakers even to the length of abusive names and downright scurrility, as appears both here and in Cicero's Philippics, hurts and offends a modern ear. What those ancient orators gained by such a manner in point of freedom and boldness is more than compensated by want of dignity ; which seems to give an advantage, in this respect, to the greater decency of modern speaking.

The style of Demosthenes is strong and concise, though sometimes, it must not be dissembled, harsh and abrupt. His words are very expressive ; his arrangement is firm and manly ; and though far from being unmusical, yet it seems difficult to find in him that studied, but concealed number and rhythmus, which some of the ancient critics are fond of attributing to him. Negligent of these lesser graces, one would rather conceive him to have aimed at that sublime which lies in sentiment. His action and pronunciation are recorded to have

been uncommonly vehement and ardent ; which, from the manner of his composition, we are naturally led to believe. The character which one forms of him, from reading his works, is of the austere, rather than the gentle kind. He is, on every occasion, grave, serious, passionate ; takes every thing on a high tone ; never lets himself down, nor attempts any thing like pleasantry. If any fault can be found with his admirable eloquence, it is, that he sometimes borders on the hard and dry. He may be thought to want smoothness and grace ; which Dionysius of Halicarnassus attributes to his imitating too closely the manner of Thucydides, who was his great model for style, and whose history he is said to have written eight times over with his own hand. But these defects are far more than compensated, by that admirable and masterly force of masculine eloquence, which, as it overpowered all who heard it, cannot, at this day, be read without emotion.

After the days of Demosthenes, Greece lost her liberty ; eloquence of course languished, and relapsed again into the feeble manner introduced by the rhetoricians and sophists. Demetrius Phalerius, who lived in the next age to Demosthenes, attained indeed some character, but he is represented to us as a flowery, rather than a persuasive speaker, who aimed at grace rather than

substance. “ *Delectabat Athenienses,*” says Cicero, “ *magis quam inflammabat.*”—He amused “ the Athenians rather than warmed them.” And after his time we hear of no more Grecian orators of any note.

LECTURE XXVI.

HISTORY OF ELOQUENCE CONTINUED.—ROMAN ELOQUENCE.—CICERO.—MODERN ELOQUENCE.

HAVING treated of the rise of eloquence, and of its state among the Greeks, we now proceed to consider its progress among the Romans, where we shall find one model, at least, of eloquence, in its most splendid and illustrious form. The Romans were long a martial nation, altogether rude, and unskilled in arts of any kind. Arts were of late introduction among them ; they were not known till after the conquest of Greece ; and the Romans always acknowledge the Grecians as their masters in every part of learning :

Grecia capta ferum victorem cepit, et artes
Intulit agresti Latio *— HOR. Epist. ad Aug.

* When conquer'd Greece brought in her captive arts,
She triumph'd o'er her savage conqueror's hearts ;
Taught our rough verse its numbers to refine,
And our rude style with elegance to shine. FRANCIS.

As the Romans derived their eloquence, poetry, and learning, from the Greeks, so they must be confessed to be far inferior to them in genius for all these accomplishments. They were a more grave and magnificent, but a less acute and sprightly people. They had neither the vivacity nor the sensibility of the Greeks ; their passions were not so easily moved, nor their conceptions so lively ; in comparison of them they were a phlegmatic nation. Their language resembled their character ; it was regular, firm, and stately ; but wanted that simple and expressive naiveté, and, in particular, that flexibility to suit every different mode and species of composition, for which the Greek tongue is distinguished above that of every other country :

Graii ingenijum, Graii dedit ore rotundo
Musa loqui ~~“~~

A.R.S. POET.

And hence, when we compare together the various rival productions of Greece and Rome, we shall always find this distinction obtain, that in the Greek productions there is more native genius ; in the Roman, more regularity and art. What the Greeks invented, the Romans polished ; the one was the original, rough sometimes, and incorrect ; the other, a finished copy.

* To her lov'd Greeks the muse indulgent gave,
To her lov'd Greeks with greatness to conceive ;
And in sublimer tone their language raise :
Her Greeks were only covetous of praise.

FRANCIS.

As the Roman government, during the republic, was of the popular kind, there is no doubt but that, in the hands of the leading men, public speaking became early an engine of government, and was employed for gaining distinction and power. But in the rude unpolished times of the state, their speaking was hardly of that sort that could be called eloquence. Though Cicero, in his treatise “*De Claris Oratoribus*,” endeavours to give some reputation to the elder Cato, and those who were his contemporaries, yet he acknowledges it to have been “*Asperum et horridum genus dicendi*,” a rude and harsh strain of speech. It was not till a short time preceding Cicero’s age, that the Roman orators rose into any note. Crassus and Antonius, two of the speakers in the dialogue *De Oratore*, appear to have been the most eminent, whose different manners Cicero describes with great beauty in that dialogue, and in his other rhetorical works. But as none of their productions are extant, nor any of Hortensius’s, who was Cicero’s contemporary and rival at the bar, it is needless to transcribe from Cicero’s writings the account which he gives of those great men, and of the character of their eloquence *.

* Such as are desirous of particular information on this head, had better have recourse to the original, by reading Cicero’s three books *De Oratore*, and his other two treatises, entitled, the one, *Brutus, sive de Claris Oratoribus*; the other, *Orator ad. M. Brutum*; which, on several accounts, well deserve perusal.

The object in this period most worthy to draw our attention is Cicero himself; whose name alone suggests every thing that is splendid in oratory. With the history of his life, and with his character as a man and a politician, we have not at present any direct concern. We consider him only as an eloquent speaker; and, in this view, it is our business to remark both his virtues and his defects, if he has any. His virtues are, beyond controversy, eminently great. In all his orations there is high art. He begins, generally, with a regular exordium, and with much preparation and insinuation prepossesses the hearers, and studies to gain their affections. His method is clear, and his arguments are arranged with great propriety. His method is, indeed, more clear, than that of Demosthenes; and this is one advantage which he has over him. We find every thing in its proper place; he never attempts to move, till he has endeavoured to convince; and in moving, especially the softer passions, he is very successful. No man knew the power and force of words better than Cicero. He rolls them along with the greatest beauty and pomp; and, in the structure of his sentences, is curious and exact to the highest degree. He is always full and flowing, never abrupt. He is a great amplifier of every subject; magnificent, and in his sentiments highly moral. His manner is on the whole diffuse, yet it is often happily varied, and suited to the subject. In his four orations, for instance, against Catiline, the tone and style of

each of them, particularly the first and last, is very different, and accommodated with a great deal of judgment to the occasion, and the situation in which they were spoken. When a great public object roused his mind, and demanded indignation and force, he departs considerably from that loose and declamatory manner to which he leans at other times, and becomes exceedingly cogent and vehement. This is the case in his orations against Anthony, and in those two against Verres and Catiline.

Together with those high qualities which Cicero possesses, he is not exempt from certain defects, of which it is necessary to take notice. For the Ciceronian eloquence is a pattern so dazzling by its beauties, that, if not examined with accuracy and judgment, it is apt to betray the unwary into a faulty imitation ; and I am of opinion, that it has sometimes produced this effect. In most of his Orations, especially those composed in the earlier part of his life, there is too much art ; even carried the length of ostentation. There is too visible a parade of eloquence. He seems often to aim at obtaining admiration, rather than at operating conviction by what he says. Hence, on some occasions, he is showy rather than solid ; and diffuse, where he ought to have been pressing. His sentences are, at all times, round and sonorous ; they cannot be accused of monotony, for they possess variety of cadence ; but, from too great a study

of magnificence, he is sometimes deficient in strength. On all occasions, where there is the least room for it, he is full of himself. His great actions, and the real services which he had performed to his country, apologize for this in part; ancient manners too, imposed fewer restraints from the side of decorum; but, even after these allowances made, Cicero's ostentation of himself cannot be wholly palliated; and his Orations, indeed all his works, leave on our minds the impression of a good man, but withal, of a vain man.

The defects which we have now taken notice of in Cicero's eloquence were not unobserved by his own contemporaries. This we learn from Quinctilian, and from the author of the dialogue “*De Causis Corruptæ Eloquentiæ*.” Brutus, we are informed, called him, “fractum et elumbem,” broken and enervated. “*Suorum temporum homines*,” says Quinctilian, *incessere audebant eum ut tumidiorem et Asianum, et redundantem, et in repetitionibus nimium, et in salibus aliquando frigidum, et in compositione fractum et exultantem, et pene viro molliorem* *.” These censures were undoubtedly carried too far; and savour of malignity and personal enmity. They saw

* “His contemporaries ventured to reproach him as swelling, redundant, and Asiatic, too frequent in repetitions; in his attempts towards wit, sometimes cold; and in the strain of his composition, feeble, desultory, and more effeminate than became a man.”

his defects, but they aggravated them; and the source of these aggravations can be traced to the difference which prevailed in Rome, in Cicero's days, between two great parties with respect to eloquence; the “Attici,” and the “Asiani.” The former, who called themselves the Attics, were the patrons of what they conceived to be the chaste, simple, and natural style of eloquence; from which they accused Cicero as having departed, and as leaning to the florid Asiatic manner. In several of his rhetorical works, particularly in his “Orator ad Brutum,” Cicero, in his turn, endeavours to expose this sect, as substituting a frigid and jejune manner, in place of the true Attic eloquence; and contends that his own composition was formed upon the real Attic style. In the 10th chapter of the last book of Quintilian's Institutions, a full account is given of the disputes between these two parties, and of the Rhodian or middle manner between the Attics and the Asiatics. Quintilian himself declares on Cicero's side; and whether it be called Attic or Asiatic, prefers the full, the copious, and the amplifying style. He concludes with this very just observation: “Plures sunt eloquentiæ facies; sed stultissimum est quærere, ad quam recturus se sit orator; “cum omnis species, quæ modo recta est, habeat “usum.—Utetur enim, ut res exiget, omnibus; “nec pro causâ modo, sed pro partibus causæ*.”

* “Eloquence admits of many different forms; and nothing can be more foolish than to inquire by which of them

On the subject of comparing Cicero and Demosthenes, much has been said by critical writers. The different manners of these two princes of eloquence, and the distinguishing characters of each, are so strongly marked in their writings, that the comparison is, in many respects, obvious and easy. The character of Demosthenes is vigour and austerity ; that of Cicero is gentleness and insinuation. In the one, you find more manliness ; in the other, more ornament. The one is more harsh, but more spirited and cogent ; the other more agreeable, but withal, looser and weaker.

To account for this difference, without any prejudice to Cicero, it has been said, that we must look to the nature of their different auditories; that the refined Athenians followed with ease the concise and convincing eloquence of Demosthenes ; but that a manner more popular, more flowery, and declamatory, was requisite in speaking to the Romans, a people less acute, and less acquainted with the arts of speech. But this is not satisfactory. For we must observe, that the Greek orator spoke much oftener before a mixed multitude than the Roman. Almost all the public business of Athens was transacted in popular assemblies. The com-

“ an orator is to regulate his composition ; since every form which “ is in itself just, has its own place and use. The orator, accord- “ ing as circumstances require, will employ them all ; suiting “ them not only to the cause or subject of which he treats, but “ to the different parts of that subject.”

mon people were his hearers and his judges. Whereas Cicero generally addressed himself to the “*patres conscripti*,” or in criminal trials to the *prætor*, and the select judges; and it cannot be imagined, that the persons of highest rank and best education in Rome, required a more diffuse manner of pleading than the common citizens of Athens, in order to make them understand the cause, or relish the speaker. Perhaps we shall come nearer the truth, by observing, that to unite all the qualities, without the least exception, that form a perfect orator, and to excel equally in each of those qualities, is not to be expected from the limited powers of human genius. The highest degree of strength is, I suspect, never found united with the highest degree of smoothness and ornament; equal attentions to both are incompatible; and the genius that carries ornament to its utmost length, is not of such a kind as can excel as much in vigour. For there plainly lies the characteristical difference between these two celebrated orators.

It is a disadvantage to Demosthenes, that, besides his conciseness, which sometimes produces obscurity, the language in which he writes is less familiar to most of us than the Latin, and that we are less acquainted with the Greek antiquities than we are with the Roman. We read Cicero with more ease, and of course with more pleasure. Independent of this circumstance too, he is, ne

doubt, in himself, a more agreeable writer than the other. But notwithstanding this advantage, I am of opinion, that were the state in danger, or some great national interest at stake, which drew the serious attention of the public, an oration in the spirit and strain of Demosthenes would have more weight, and produce greater effects, than one in the Ciceronian manner. Were Demosthenes's Philippics spoken in a British assembly, in a similar conjuncture of affairs, they would convince and persuade at this day. The rapid style, the vehement reasoning, the disdain, anger, boldness, freedom, which perpetually animate them, would render their success infallible over any modern assembly. I question whether the same can be said of Cicero's orations; whose eloquence, however beautiful, and however well suited to the Roman taste, yet borders oftener on declamation, and is more remote from the manner in which we now expect to hear real business and causes of importance treated *.

In comparing Demosthenes and Cicero, most of the French critics are disposed to give the preference to the latter. P. Rapin the jesuit, in the parallels which he has drawn between some of the

* " In this judgment, I concur with Mr David Hume, in his " Essay upon Eloquence. He gives it as his opinion, that, of all " human productions, the orators of Demosthenes present to us " the models which approach the nearest to perfection."

most eminent Greek and Roman writers, uniformly decides in favour of the Roman. For the preference which he gives to Cicero, he assigns, and lays stress on one reason of a pretty extraordinary nature, viz. that Demosthenes could not possibly have so complete an insight as Cicero into the manners and passions of men ; Why ? because he had not the advantage of perusing Aristotle's Treatise of Rhetoric, wherein, says our critic, he has fully laid open that mystery : and to support this weighty argument, he enters into a controversy with A. Gellius, in order to prove that Aristotle's Rhetoric was not published till after Demosthenes had spoken, at least, his most considerable orations. Nothing can be more childish. Such orators as Cicero and Demosthenes derived their knowledge of the human passions, and their power of moving them, from higher sources than any treatise of rhetotic. One French critic has indeed departed from the common track ; and, after bestowing on Cicero those just praises to which the consent of so many ages shews him to be entitled, concludes, however, with giving the palm to Demosthenes. This is Fenelon, the famous archbishop of Cambray, and author of *Telemachus* ; himself surely no enemy to all the graces and flowers of composition. It is in his *Reflections on Rhetoric and Poetry*, that he gives this judgment ; a small tract, commonly published along with his *Dialogues on Elo-*

quence *. These dialogues and reflections are particularly worthy of perusal, as containing, I think, the justest ideas on the subject, that are to be met with in any modern critical writer.

The reign of eloquence, among the Romans, was very short. After the age of Cicero, it languished, or rather expired ; and we have no reason to wonder at this being the case. For not only was liberty entirely extinguished, but arbitrary

* As his expressions are remarkably happy and beautiful, the passage here referred to deserves to be inserted.—“ Je ne
“ crains pas dire, que Demosthene me paroît supérieur à Cicé-
“ ron. Je proteste que personne n'admire plus Cicéron, que je
“ fais. Il embellit tout ce qu'il touche. Il fait honneur à la
“ parole. Il fait des mots ce qu'un autre n'en sauroit faire. Il
“ a je ne sai combien de sortes d'esprits. Il est même court, et
“ vehement, toutes les fois qu'il veut l'estre ; contre Catilin,
“ contre Verres, contre Antoine. Mais on remarque quelque
“ parure dan sons discours. L'art y est merveilleux ; mais on
“ l'entrevoit. L'orateur, en pensant au salut de la république,
“ ne s'oublie pas, et ne se laisse pas oublier. Demosthene pa-
“ roit sortir de soi, et ne voir que la patrie. Il ne cherche point
“ le beau ; il le fait, sans y penser. Il est au-dessus de l'admi-
“ ration. Il se sert de la parole, comme un homme modeste de
“ son habit, pour se couvrir. Il tonne ; il foudroye. C'est un
“ torrent qui entraîne tout. On ne peut le critiquer, parcequ'on
“ est saisi. On pense aux choses qu'il dit, et non à ses paroles.
“ On le perd de vue. On n'est occupé que de Philippe qui
“ envahit tout. Je suis charmé de ces deux orateurs : mais
“ j'avoue que je suis moins touché de l'art infini, et de la magni-
“ fique éloquence de Cicéron, que de la rapide simplicité de
“ Demosthene.”

power felt in its heaviest and most oppressive weight; providence having, in its wrath, delivered over the Roman empire to a succession of some of the most execrable tyrants that ever disgraced and scourged the human race. Under their government, it was naturally to be expected that taste would be corrupted, and genius discouraged. Some of the ornamental arts, less intimately connected with liberty, continued, for a while, to prevail; but for that masculine eloquence, which had exercised itself in the senate, and in the public affairs, there was no longer any place. The change which was produced on eloquence, by the nature of the government, and the state of the public manners, is beautifully described in the *Dialogue de Causis corruptæ Eloquentiæ*, which is attributed, by some, to Tacitus, by others to Quintilian. Luxury, effeminacy, and flattery overwhelmed all. The forum, where so many great affairs had been transacted, was now become a desert. Private causes were still pleaded; but the public was no longer interested, nor any general attention drawn to what passed there:

“ Unus inter hæc, et alter, dicenti, assistit; et res
“ velut in solitudine agitur. Oratori autem cla-
“ more plausuque opus est, et velut quodam the-
“ atro, qualia quotidie antiquis oratoribus con-
“ tingebant; cum tot ac tam nobiles forum co-
“ arctarent; cum clientelæ, et tribus, et muni-
“ cipiorum legationes, periclitantibus assisterent;

“ cum in plerisque judiciis crederet populus Ro-
“ manus sua interesse quid judicaretur *.”

In the schools of the declaimers, the corruption of eloquence was completed. Imaginary and fantastic subjects, such as had no reference to real life or business, were made the themes of declamation ; and all manner of false and affected ornaments were brought into vogue : “ Pace vestra
“ liceat dixisse,” says Petronius Arbiter, to the declaimers of his time, “ primi omnem eloquen-
“ tiam perdidistis. Levibus enim ac inanibus
“ sonis ludibria quædam excitando, effecistis ut
“ corpus orationis enervaretur atque caderet. Et
“ ideo ego existimo adolescentulos in scholis stul-
“ tissimos fieri, quia nihil ex iis, quæ in usu habe-
“ mus, aut audiunt, aut vident; sed piratas cum
“ catenis in littore stantes; et tyrannos edicta
“ scribentes quibus imperent filiis ut patrum su-
“ orum capita præcidant; sed responsa, in pesti-
“ lentia data, ut virgines tres aut plures immo-

* “ The courts of judicature are, at present, so unfrequented,
“ that the orator seems to stand alone, and talk to bare walls.
“ But eloquence rejoices in the bursts of loud applause, and ex-
“ ults in a full audience ; such as used to press round the ancient
“ orators, when the forum stood crowded with nobles ; when a
“ numerous retinue of clients, when foreign ambassadors, when
“ tribes, and whole cities assisted at the debate ; and when, in
“ many trials, the Roman people understood themselves to be
“ concerned in the event.”

“lentur; sed mellitos verborum globulos, et omnia quasi papavere, et sesamo sparsa. Qui inter hæc nutriuntur, non magis sapere possunt, quam bene olere qui in culina habitant*.” In the hands of the Greek rhetoricians, the manly and sensible eloquence of their first noted speakers degenerated, as I formerly shewed, into subtlety and sophistry; in the hands of the Roman declaimers, it passed into the quaint and affected; into point and antithesis. This corrupt manner begins to appear in the writings of Seneca; and shews itself, also, in the famous panegyric of Pliny the younger on Trajan, which may be considered as the last effort of Roman oratory. Though the author was a man of genius, yet it is deficient in nature and ease. We see, throughout the whole,

* “With your permission, I must be allowed to say, that you have been the first destroyers of all true eloquence. For by those mock subjects on which you employ your empty and unmeaning compositions, you have enervated and overthrown all that is manly and substantial in oratory. I cannot but conclude, that the youth whom you educate must be totally perverted in your schools, by hearing and seeing nothing which has any affinity to real life, or human affairs; but stories of pirates standing on the shore, provided with chains for loading their captives, and of tyrants issuing their edicts, by which children are commanded to cut off the heads of their parents; but responses given by oracles in the time of pestilence, that several virgins must be sacrificed; but glittering ornaments of phrase, and a style highly spiced, if we may say so, with affected conceits. They who are educated in the midst of such studies, can no more acquire a good taste, than they can smell sweet who dwell perpetually in a kitchen.”

a perpetual attempt to depart from the ordinary way of thinking, and to support a forced elevation.

In the decline of the Roman empire, the introduction of Christianity gave rise to a new species of eloquence, in the apologies, sermons, and pastoral writings of the Fathers of the Church. Among the Latin fathers, Lactantius and Minutius Felix are the most remarkable for purity of style; and, in a later age, the famous St Augustine possesses a considerable share of sprightliness and strength. But none of the fathers afford any just models of eloquence. Their language, as soon as we descend to the third or fourth century, becomes harsh; and they are, in general, infected with the taste of that age, a love of swoln and strained thoughts, and of the play of words. Among the Greek fathers, the most distinguished, by far, for his oratorial merit, is St Chrysostome. His language is pure; his style highly figured. He is copious, smooth, and sometimes pathetic. But he retains, at the same time, much of that character which has been always attributed to the Asiatic eloquence, diffuse and redundant to a great degree, and often overwrought and tumid. He may be read, however, with advantage, for the eloquence of the pulpit, as being freer from false ornaments than the Latin fathers.

As there is nothing more that occurs to me deserving particular attention in the middle age, I

pass now to the taste of eloquence in modern times. Here, it must be confessed, that in no European nation public speaking has been considered as so great an object, or been cultivated with so much care, as in Greece or Rome. Its reputation has never been so high ; its effects have never been so considerable ; nor has that high and sublime kind of it, which prevailed in those ancient states, been so much as aimed at : notwithstanding, too, that a new profession has been established, which gives peculiar advantages to oratory, and affords it the noblest field ; I mean that of the church. The genius of the world seems, in this respect, to have undergone some alteration. The two countries where we might expect to find most of the spirit of eloquence, are France and Great Britain : France, on account of the distinguished turn of the nation towards all the liberal arts, and of the encouragement which, for this century past, these arts have received from the public ; Great Britain, on account both of the public capacity and genius, and of the free government which it enjoys. Yet so it is, that in neither of those countries, has the talent of public speaking risen near to the degree of its ancient splendour ; while in other productions of genius, both in prose and in poetry, they have contended for the prize with Greece and Rome ; nay, in some compositions, may be thought to have surpassed them : the names of Demosthenes and Cicero stand, at this day, unrivalled in fame ; and it would be held presumptuous and absurd to

pretend to place any modern whatever in the same, or even in a nearly equal rank.

It seems particularly surprising, that Great Britain should not have made a more conspicuous figure in eloquence than it has hitherto attained; when we consider the enlightened, and, at the same time, the free and bold genius of the country, which seems not a little to favour oratory; and when we consider that of all the polite nations, it alone possesses a popular government, or admits into the legislature such numerous assemblies as can be supposed to lie under the dominion of eloquence *. Notwithstanding this advantage, it must be confessed, that, in most parts of eloquence, we are undoubtedly inferior, not only to the Greeks and Romans, by many degrees, but also, in some respects, to the French. We have philosophers, eminent and conspicuous, perhaps beyond any nation, in every branch of science. We have both taste and erudition in a high degree. We have historians, we have poets, of the greatest name; but of orators, or public speakers, how little have

* Mr Hume, in his *Essay on Eloquence*, makes this observation, and illustrates it with his usual elegance. He, indeed, supposes, that no satisfactory reasons can be given to account for the inferiority of modern to ancient eloquence. In this, I differ from him, and shall endeavour, before the conclusion of this Lecture, to point out some causes, to which, I think, it may in a great measure be ascribed, in the three great scenes of public speaking.

we to boast? And where are the monuments of their genius to be found? In every period we have had some who made a figure, by managing the debates in parliament; but that figure was commonly owing to their wisdom, or their experience in business, more than to their talents for oratory; and unless, in some few instances, wherein the power of oratory has appeared, indeed, with much lustre, the art of parliamentary speaking rather obtained to several a temporary applause, than conferred upon any a lasting renown. At the bar, though, questionless, we have many able pleaders, yet few or none of their pleadings have been thought worthy to be transmitted to posterity; or have commanded attention, any longer than the cause which was the subject of them interested the public; while, in France, the pleadings of Patru, in the former age, and those of Cochin and D'Aguesseau, in later times, are read with pleasure, and are often quoted as examples of eloquence by the French critics. In the same manner, in the pulpit, the British divines have distinguished themselves by the most accurate and rational compositions, which, perhaps, any nation can boast of. Many printed sermons we have, full of good sense, and of sound divinity and morality; but the eloquence to be found in them, the power of persuasion, of interesting and engaging the heart, which is, or ought to be, the great object of the pulpit, is far from bearing a suitable proportion to the excellence of the matter. There are few arts, in my

opinion, farther from perfection than that of preaching is among us ; the reasons of which I shall afterwards have occasion to discuss. In proof of the fact, it is sufficient to observe, that an English sermon, instead of being a persuasive animated oration, seldom rises beyond the strain of correct and dry reasoning : whereas in the sermons of Bossuet, Massillon, Bourdaloue, and Flechier, among the French, we see a much higher species of eloquence aimed at, and in a great measure attained, than the British preachers have in view.

In general, the characteristical difference between the state of eloquence in France and in Great Britain is, that the French have adopted higher ideas both of pleasing and persuading, by means of oratory, though sometimes, in the execution, they fail. In Great Britain, we have taken up eloquence on a lower key ; but in our execution, as was naturally to be expected, have been more correct. In France, the style of their orators is ornamented with bolder figures ; and their discourse carried on with more amplification, more warmth and elevation. The composition is often very beautiful ; but sometimes, also, too diffuse, and deficient in that strength and cogency which renders eloquence powerful ; a defect owing, perhaps, in part, to the genius of the people, which leads them to attend fully as much to ornament as to substance ; and, in part, to the nature of their government, which, by excluding public speaking from having

much influence on the conduct of public affairs, deprives eloquence of its best opportunity for acquiring nerves and strength. Hence the pulpit is the principal field which is left for their eloquence. The members, too, of the French academy give harangues at their admission, in which genius often appears; but labouring under the misfortune of having no subject to discourse upon, they run commonly into flattery and panegyric, the most barren and insipid of all topics.

I observed before, that the Greeks and Romans aspired to a more sublime species of eloquence than is aimed at by the moderns. Theirs was of the vehement and passionate kind, by which they endeavoured to inflame the minds of their hearers, and hurry their imaginations away: and, suitable to this vehemence of thought, was their vehemence of gesture and action; the “supplosio “pedis *,” the “percussio frontis et femoris *,” were, as we learn from Cicero’s writings, usual gestures among them at the bar, though now they would be reckoned extravagant any where, except upon the stage. Modern eloquence is much more cool and temperate; and in Great Britain especially, has confined itself almost wholly to the argumentative and rational. It is much of that species which the ancient critics called the “Te-“nus,” or “Subtilis;” which aims at convincing

* Vide, De Clar. Orator.

and instructing, rather than affecting the passions, and assumes a tone not much higher than common argument and discourse.

Several reasons may be given, why modern eloquence has been so limited and humble in its efforts. In the first place I am of opinion, that this change must, in part, be ascribed to that correct turn of thinking, which has been so much studied in modern times. It can hardly be doubted, that, in many efforts of mere genius, the ancient Greeks and Romans excelled us; but, on the other hand, that, in accuracy and closeness of reasoning on many subjects, we have some advantage over them, ought, I think, to be admitted also. In proportion as the world has advanced, philosophy has made greater progress. A certain strictness of good sense has, in this island particularly, been cultivated, and introduced into every subject. Hence we are more on our guard against the flowers of elocution; we are on the watch; we are jealous of being deceived by oratory. Our public speakers are obliged to be more reserved than the ancients, in their attempts to elevate the imagination, and warm the passions; and, by the influence of prevailing taste, their own genius is sobered and chastened, perhaps, in too great a degree. It is likely too, I confess, that what we fondly ascribe to our correctness and good sense, is owing, in a great measure, to our phlegm and natural coldness. For the vivacity and sensibility

of the Greeks and Romans, more especially of the former, seem to have been much greater than ours, and to have given them a higher relish of all the beauties of oratory.

Besides these national considerations, we must, in the next place, attend to peculiar circumstances in the three great scenes of public speaking, which have proved disadvantageous to the growth of eloquence among us. Though the parliament of Great Britain be the noblest field which Europe, at this day, affords to a public speaker, yet eloquence has never been so powerful an instrument there, as it was in the popular assemblies of Greece and Rome. Under some former reigns, the high hand of arbitrary power bore a violent sway ; and in later times ministerial influence has generally prevailed. The power of speaking, though always considerable, yet has been often found too feeble to counterbalance either of these ; and, of course, has not been studied with so much zeal and fervour, as where its effect on business was irresistible and certain.

At the bar, our disadvantage, in comparison of the ancients, is great. Among them, the judges were generally numerous ; the laws were few and simple ; the decision of causes were left, in a great measure, to equity and the sense of mankind. Here was an ample field for what they termed Judicial Eloquence. But among the moderns, the

case is quite altered. The system of law is become much more complicated. The knowledge of it is thereby rendered so laborious an attainment, as to be the chief object of a lawyer's education, and, in a manner, the study of his life. The art of speaking is but a secondary accomplishment, to which he can afford to devote much less of his time and labour. The bounds of eloquence, besides, are now much circumscribed at the bar ; and, except in a few cases, reduced to arguing from strict law, statute, or precedent ; by which means knowledge, much more than oratory, is become the principal requisite.

With regard to the pulpit, it has certainly been a great disadvantage, that the practice of reading sermons, instead of repeating them from memory, has prevailed in England. This may, indeed, have introduced accuracy ; but it has done great prejudice to eloquence ; for a discourse read, is far inferior to an oration spoken. It leads to a different sort of composition, as well as of delivery ; and can never have an equal effect upon any audience. Another circumstance, too, has been unfortunate. The sectaries and fanatics, before the Restoration, adopted a warm, zealous, and popular manner of preaching ; and those who adhered to them in after-times, continued to distinguish themselves by somewhat of the same manner. The odium of these sects drove the established church from that warmth which they were judged to have

carried too far, into the opposite extreme of a studied coolness and composure of manner. Hence, from the art of persuasion, which preaching ought always to be, it has passed, in England, into mere reasoning and instruction ; which not only has brought down the eloquence of the pulpit to a lower tone than it might justly assume ; but has produced this farther effect, that, by accustoming the public ear to such cool and dispassionate discourses, it has tended to fashion other kinds of public speaking upon the same model.

Thus I have given some view of the state of eloquence in modern times, and endeavoured to account for it. It has, as we have seen, fallen below that splendour which it maintained in ancient ages ; and from being sublime and vehement, has come down to be temperate and cool. Yet, still, in that region which it occupies, it admits great scope ; and, to the defect of zeal and application, more than to the want of capacity and genius, we may ascribe its not having hitherto attained higher distinction. It is a field where there is much honour yet to be reaped. It is an instrument which may be employed for purposes of the highest importance. The ancient models may still, with much advantage, be set before us for imitation ; though in that imitation, we must, doubtless, have some regard to what modern taste and modern manners will bear ; of which I shall afterwards have occasion to say more.

LECTURE XXVII.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF PUBLIC SPEAKING — ELOQUENCE OF POPULAR ASSEMBLIES—EXTRACTS FROM DEMOSTHENES.

AFTER the preliminary views which have been given of the nature of eloquence in general, and of the state in which it has subsisted in different ages and countries, I am now to enter on the consideration of the different kinds of public speaking, the distinguishing characters of each, and the rules which relate to them. The ancients divided all orations into three kinds: the demonstrative, the deliberative, and the judicial. The scope of the demonstrative was to praise or to blame; that of the deliberative, to advise or to dissuade; that of the judicial, to accuse or to defend. The chief subjects of demonstrative eloquence were panegyrics, invectives, gratulatory and funeral orations. The deliberative was employed in matters of public concern agitated in the senate, or before the assemblies of the people. The judicial is the same with the eloquence of the bar, employed in

addressing judges, who have power to absolve or to condemn. This division runs through all the ancient treatises on rhetoric; and is followed by the moderns who copy them. It is a division not inartificial; and comprehends most, or all of the matters which can be the subject of public discourse. It will, however, suit our purpose better, and be found, I imagine, more useful, to follow that division, which the train of modern speaking naturally points out to us, taken from the three great scenes of eloquence, popular assemblies, the bar, and the pulpit; each of which has a different character, that particularly suits it. This division coincides in part with the ancient one. The eloquence of the bar is precisely the same with what the ancients called the judicial. The eloquence of popular assemblies, though mostly of what they term the deliberative species, yet admits also of the demonstrative. The eloquence of the pulpit is altogether of a distinct nature, and cannot be properly reduced under any of the heads of the ancient rhetoricians.

To all the three, pulpit, bar, and popular assemblies, belong, in common, the rules concerning the conduct of a discourse in all its parts. Of these rules I purpose afterwards to treat at large. But before proceeding to them, I intend to shew, first, what is peculiar to each of these three kinds of oratory, in their spirit, character, or manner. For every species of public speaking has a manner

or character peculiarly suited to it; of which it is highly material to have a just idea, in order to direct the application of general rules. The eloquence of a lawyer is fundamentally different from that of a divine, or a speaker in parliament: and to have a precise and proper idea of the distinguishing character which any kind of public speaking requires, is the foundation of what is called a just taste in that kind of speaking.

Laying aside any question concerning the pre-eminence in point of rank, which is due to any one of the three kinds before mentioned, I shall begin with that which tends to throw most light upon the rest, viz. the eloquence of popular assemblies. The most august theatre for this kind of eloquence, to be found in any nation of Europe, is, beyond doubt, the parliament of Great Britain. In meetings, too, of less dignity, it may display itself. Wherever there is a popular court, or wherever any number of men are assembled for debate or consultation, there, in different forms, this species of eloquence may take place.

Its object is, or ought always to be, persuasion. There must be some end proposed; some point, most commonly of public utility or good, in favour of which we seek to determine the hearers. Now, in all attempts to persuade men, we must proceed upon this principle, that it is necessary to convince their understanding. Nothing can be more erro-

neous, than to imagine, that, because speeches to popular assemblies admit more of a declamatory style than some other discourses, they therefore stand less in need of being supported by sound reasoning. When modelled upon this false idea, they may have the shew, but never can produce the effect, of real eloquence. Even the show of eloquence which they make, will please only the trifling and superficial. For, with all tolerable judges, indeed almost with all men, mere declamation soon becomes insipid. Of whatever rank the hearers be, a speaker is never to presume, that by a frothy and ostentatious harangue, without solid sense and argument, he can either make impression on them, or acquire fame to himself. It is, at least, a dangerous experiment; for, where such an artifice succeeds once, it will fail ten times. Even the common people are better judges of argument and good sense than we sometimes think them; and, upon any question of business, a plain man, who speaks to the point, without art, will generally prevail over the most artful speaker who deals in flowers and ornament, rather than in reasoning. Much more, when public speakers address themselves to any assembly where there are persons of education and improved understanding, they ought to be careful not to trifle with their hearers.

Let it be ever kept in view, that the foundation of all that can be called eloquence, is good sense, and solid thought. As popular as the orations of

Demosthenes were, spoken to all the citizens of Athens, every one who looks into them, must see how fraught they are with argument ; and how important it appeared to him, to convince the understanding, in order to persuade, or to work on the principles of action. Hence their influence in his own time ; hence their fame at this day. Such a pattern as this, public speakers ought to set before them for imitation, rather than follow the track of those loose and frothy declaimers, who have brought discredit on eloquence. Let it be their first study, in addressing any popular assembly, to be previously masters of the business on which they are to speak ; to be well provided with matter and argument ; and to rest upon these the chief stress. This will always give to their discourse an air of manliness and strength, which is a powerful instrument of persuasion. Ornament, if they have genius for it, will follow of course ; at any rate it demands only their secondary study : “ Cura sit verborum ; sollicitudo rerum :”—“ To your expression be attentive, but about your matter be solicitous,” is an advice of Quintilian, which cannot be too often recollected by all who study oratory.

In the next place, in order to be persuasive speakers in a popular assembly, it is in my opinion, a capital rule, that we be ourselves persuaded of whatever we recommend to others. Never, when it can be avoided, ought we to espouse any side of the argument, but what we believe to be the true

and the right one. Seldom or never will a man be eloquent, but when he is in earnest, and uttering his own sentiments. They are only the “veræ ‘voces ab imo pectore,” the unassumed language of the heart or head, that carry the force of conviction. In a former Lecture, when entering on this subject, I observed, that all high eloquence must be the offspring of passion, or warm emotion. It is this which makes every man persuasive ; and gives a force to his genius, which it possesses at no other time. Under what disadvantage, then, is he placed, who, not feeling what he utters, must counterfeit a warmth to which he is a stranger.

I know, that young people, on purpose to train themselves to the art of speaking, imagine it useful to adopt that side of the question under debate, which, to themselves, appears the weakest, and to try what figure they can make upon it. But, I am afraid, this is not the most improving education for public speaking ; and that it tends to form them to a habit of flimsy and trivial discourse. Such a liberty they should at no time allow themselves, unless in meetings where no real business is carried on, but where declamation and improvement in speech is the sole aim. Nor even in such meetings, would I recommend it as the most useful exercise. They will improve themselves to more advantage, and acquit themselves with more honour, by choosing always that side of the debate to which, in their own judgment, they are most inclined, and

excellent.

supporting it by what seems to themselves most solid and persuasive. They will acquire the habit of reasoning closely, and expressing themselves with warmth and force, much more when they are adhering to their own sentiments, than when they are speaking in contradiction to them. In assemblies where any real business is carried on, whether that business be of much importance or not, it is always of dangerous consequence for young practitioners to make trial of this sort of play of speech. It may fix an imputation on their characters before they are aware; and what they intended merely as amusement, may be turned to the discredit either of their principles or their understanding.

Debate, in popular courts, seldom allows the speaker that full and accurate preparation beforehand, which the pulpit always, and the bar sometimes admits. The arguments must be suited to the course which the debate takes: and as no man can exactly foresee this, one who trusts to a set speech, composed in his closet, will, on many occasions, be thrown out of the ground which he had taken. He will find it preoccupied by others, or his reasonings superseded by some new turn of the business; and, if he ventures to use his prepared speech, it will be frequently at the hazard of making an awkward figure. There is a general prejudice with us, and not wholly an unjust one, against set speeches in public meetings. The only occasion when they have any propriety is, at the

opening of a debate, when the speaker has it in his power to choose his field. But as the debate advances, and parties warm, discourses of this kind become more unsuitable. They want the native air, the appearance of being suggested by the business that is going on ; study and ostentation are apt to be visible ; and, of course, though applauded as elegant, they are seldom so persuasive as more free and unconstrained discourses.

This, however, does not by any means conclude against premeditation of what we are to say ; the neglect of which, and the trusting wholly to extemporaneous efforts, will unavoidably produce the habit of speaking in a loose and undigested manner. But the premeditation which is of most advantage, in the case which we now consider, is of the subject or argument in general, rather than of nice composition in any particular branch of it. With regard to the matter, we cannot be too accurate in our preparation, so as to be fully masters of the business under consideration ; but, with regard to words and expression, it is very possible so far to overdo, as to render our speech stiff and precise. Indeed, till once persons acquire that firmness, that presence of mind, and command of expression, in a public meeting, which nothing but habit and practice can bestow, it may be proper for a young speaker to commit to memory the whole of what he is to say. But, after some performances of this kind have given him boldness,

he will find it the better method not to confine himself so strictly ; but only to write, beforehand, some sentences with which he intends to set out, in order to put himself fairly in the train ; and, for the rest, to set down short notes of the topics, or principal thoughts upon which he is to insist, in their order, leaving the words to be suggested by the warmth of discourse. Such short notes of the substance of the discourse will be found of considerable service, to those especially who are beginning to speak in public. They will accustom them to some degree of accuracy, which, if they speak frequently, they are in danger too soon of losing. They will even accustom them to think more closely on the subject in question ; and will assist them greatly in arranging their thoughts with method and order.

This leads me next to observe, that, in all kinds of public speaking, nothing is of greater consequence, than a proper and clear method. I mean not that formal method of laying down heads and subdivisions, which is commonly practised in the pulpit; and which, in popular assemblies, unless the speaker be a man of great authority and character, and the subject of great importance, and the preparation, too, very accurate, is rather in hazard of disgusting the hearers : such an introduction presenting always the melancholy prospect of a long discourse. But though the method be not laid down in form, no discourse of any length should be with-

out method ; that is, every thing should be found in its proper place. Every one who speaks will find it of the greatest advantage to himself to have previously arranged his thoughts, and classed under proper heads, in his own mind, what he is to deliver. This will assist his memory, and carry him through his discourse, without that confusion to which one is every moment subject, who has fixed no distinct plan of what he is to say. And with respect to the hearers, order in discourse is absolutely necessary for making any proper impression. It adds both force and light to what is said. It makes them accompany the speaker easily and readily, as he goes along ; and makes them feel the full effect of every argument which he employs. Few things, therefore, deserve more to be attended to than distinct arrangement ; for eloquence, however great, can never produce entire conviction without it. Of the rules of method, and the proper distribution of the several parts of a discourse, I am hereafter to treat.

Let us now consider the style and expression suited to the eloquence of popular assemblies. Beyond doubt, these give scope for the most animated manner of public speaking. The very aspect of a large assembly, engaged in some debate of moment, and attentive to the discourse of one man, is sufficient to inspire that man with such elevation and warmth, as both gives rise to strong impressions, and give them propriety. Passion

easily rises in a great assembly, where the movements are communicated by mutual sympathy between the orator and the audience. Those bold figures, of which I treated formerly as the native language of passion, have then their proper place. That ardour of speech, that vehemence and glow of sentiment, which arise from a mind animated and inspired by some great and public object, form the peculiar characteristics of popular eloquence, in its highest degree of perfection.

The liberty, however, which we are now giving of the strong and passionate manner to this kind of oratory, must be always understood with certain limitations and restraints, which it will be necessary to point out distinctly, in order to guard against dangerous mistakes on this subject.

As, first, the warmth which we express must be suited to the occasion and the subject : for nothing can be more preposterous, than an attempt to introduce great vehemence into a subject, which is either of slight importance, or which, by its nature, requires to be treated of calmly. A temperate tone of speech is that for which there is most frequent occasion ; and he who is, on every subject, passionate and vehement, will be considered as a blusterer, and meet with little regard.

In the second place, we must take care never to counterfeit warmth without feeling it. This always

betrays persons into an unnatural manner, which exposes them to ridicule. For, as I have often suggested, to support the appearance without the real feeling of passion, is one of the most difficult things in nature. The disguise can almost never be so perfect as not to be discovered. The heart can only answer to the heart. The great rule here, as indeed in every other case, is, to follow nature : never to attempt a strain of eloquence which is not seconded by our own genius. One may be a speaker, both of much reputation and much influence, in the calm argumentative manner. To attain the pathetic, and the sublime of oratory, requires those strong sensibilities of mind, and that high power of expression, which are given to few.

In the third place, even when the subject justifies the vehement manner, and when genius prompts it ; when warmth is felt, not counterfeited ; we must still set a guard on ourselves, not to allow impetuosity to transport us too far. Without emotion in the speaker, eloquence, as was before observed, will never produce its highest effects ; but, at the same time, if the speaker lose command of himself, he will soon lose command of his audience too. He must never kindle too soon ; he must begin with moderation ; and study to carry his hearers along with him, as he warms in the progress of his discourse. For, if he runs before in the course of passion, and leaves them behind ; if they are not tuned, if we may speak so, in unison

to him, the discord will presently be felt, and be very grating. Let a speaker have ever so good reason to be animated and fired by his subject, it is always expected of him, that the awe and regard due to his audience should lay a decent restraint upon his warmth, and prevent it from carrying him beyond certain bounds. If, when most heated by the subject, he can be so far master of himself as to preserve close attention to argument, and even to some degree of correct expression, this self-command, this exertion of reason, in the midst of passion, has a wonderful effect both to please and to persuade. It is indeed the master-piece, the highest attainment of eloquence; uniting the strength of reason with the vehemence of passion; affording all the advantages of passion for the purpose of persuasion, without the confusion and disorder which are apt to accompany it.

In the fourth place, in the highest and most animated strain of popular speaking, we must always preserve regard to what the public ear will bear. This direction I give, in order to guard against an injudicious imitation of ancient orators, who, both in their pronunciation and gesture, and in their figures of expression, used a bolder manner than what the greater coolness of modern taste will readily suffer. This may perhaps, as I formerly observed, be a disadvantage to modern eloquence. It is no reason why we should be too severe in checking the impulse of genius, and continue always creeping

on the ground; but it is a reason, however, why we should avoid carrying the tone of declamation to a height that would now be reckoned extravagant. Demosthenes, to justify the unsuccessful action of Cheronæa, calls up the manes of those heroes who fell in the battle of Marathon and Plataea, and swears by them, that their fellow-citizens had done well in their endeavours to support the same cause. Cicero, in his oration for Milo, implores and obtests the Alban hills and groves, and makes a long address to them: and both passages, in these orators, have a fine effect*. But how few modern orators could venture on such apostrophes? and what a power of genius would it require to give such figures now their proper grace, or make them produce a due effect upon the hearers?

* The passage in Cicero is very beautiful, and adorned with the highest colouring of his eloquence. “ Non est humano consilio, ne mediocri quidem, judicis, deorum immortalium cura, res illa perfecta. Religiones, mehercule, ipsæ aræque cum illam belluam cadere viderunt, commovisse se videntur, et jus in illo suum retinuisse. Vos enim jam Albani tumuli, atque luci, vos inquam imploro atque obtestor, vosque Albanorum obrutæ aræ, sacrorum populi Romani sociæ et æquales, quos ille præceps amentiâ, cæsis prostratisque, sanctissimis lucis, subtractionum insanis molibus oppresserat; vestræ tum aræ, vestræ religiones viguerunt, vestra vis valuit, quam ille omni scelere polluerat. Tuque ex tuo edito monte Latiali, sancte Jupiter, cuius ille lacus, nemora, finesque, sæpè omni nefario stupro, scelere maculârat, aliquando ad eum puniendum, oculos aperuisti; vobis illæ, vobis vestro in conspectu, seræ, sed justæ tamen, et debitæ poenæ solutæ sunt.”

In the fifth and last place, In all kinds of public speaking, but especially in popular assemblies, it is a capital rule to attend to all the decorums of time, place, and character. No warmth of eloquence can atone for the neglect of these. That vehemence, which is becoming in a person of character and authority, may be unsuitable to the modesty expected from a young speaker. That sportive and witty manner which may suit one subject and one assembly, is altogether out of place in a grave cause and a solemn meeting. “*Caput artis est,*” says Quinctilian, “*decere*”—“The first principle of art is, to observe decorum.” No one should ever rise to speak in public, without forming to himself a just and strict idea of what suits his own age and character; what suits the subject, the hearers, the place, the occasion; and adjusting the whole train and manner of his speaking on this idea. All the ancients insist much on this. Consult the first chapter of the eleventh book of Quinetilian, which is employed wholly on this point, and is full of good sense. Cicero’s admonitions in his *Orator ad Brutum*, I shall give in his own words, which should never be forgotten by any who speak in public. “*Est eloquentiæ, sicut reliquarum rerum, fundamentum, sapientia; ut enim in vita, sic in oratione nihil est difficilius quam quod deceat videre; hujus ignoratione saepissime peccatur; non enim omnis fortuna, non omnis auctoritas, non omnis ætas, nec vero locus, aut tempus, aut auditor omnis, eodem aut verborum genere tractandus est, aut sententiarum.*

“ Semperque in omni parti orationis, ut vitæ,
“ quid deceat considerandum ; quod et in re de
“ qua agitur positum est, et in personis et eorum
“ qui dicunt, et eorum qui audiunt *.”—So much
for the considerations that require to be attended
to, with respect to the vehemence and warmth
which is allowed in popular eloquence.

The current of style should in general be full, free, and natural. Quaint and artificial expressions are out of place here ; and always derogate from persuasion. It is a strong and manly style which should chiefly be studied ; and metaphorical language, when properly introduced, produces often a happy effect. When the metaphors are warm, glowing, and descriptive, some inaccuracy in them will be overlooked, which, in a written composition, would be remarked and censured. Amidst the torrent of declamation, the strength of the

* “ Good sense is the foundation of eloquence, as it is of all other things that are valuable. It happens in oratory exactly as it does in life, that frequently nothing is more difficult than to discern what is proper and becoming. In consequence of mistaking this, the grossest faults are often committed. For to the different degrees of rank, fortune, and age among men, to all the varieties of time, place, and auditory, the same style of language, and the same strain of thought cannot agree. In every part of a discourse, just as in every part of life, we must attend to what is suitable and decent ; whether that be determined by the nature of the subject of which we treat, or by the characters of those who speak, or of those who hear.”

figure makes impression ; the inaccuracy of it escapes.

With regard to the degree of conciseness or diffuseness, suited to popular eloquence, it is not easy to fix any exact bounds. I know that it is common to recommend a diffuse manner as the most proper. I am inclined, however, to think, that there is danger of erring in this respect ; and that by indulging too much in the diffuse style, public speakers often lose more in point of strength, than they gain by the fulness of their illustration. There is no doubt, that in speaking to a multitude, we must not speak in sentences and apothegms : care must be taken to explain and to inculcate ; but this care may be, and frequently is carried too far. We ought always to remember, that how much soever we may be pleased with hearing ourselves speak, every audience is very ready to be tired ; and the moment they begin to be tired, all our eloquence goes for nothing. A loose and verbose manner never fails to create disgust ; and, on most occasions, we had better run the risk of saying too little than too much. Better place our thought in one strong point of view, and rest it there, than by turning it into every light, and pouring forth a profusion of words upon it, exhaust the attention of our hearers, and leave them flat and languid.

Of pronunciation and delivery, I am hereafter to treat apart. At present it is sufficient to observe,

that in speaking to mixt assemblies, the best manner of delivery is the firm and the determined. An arrogant and overbearing manner is indeed always disagreeable ; and the least appearance of it ought to be shunned : but there is a certain decisive tone, which may be assumed even by a modest man, who is thoroughly persuaded of the sentiments he utters; and which is best calculated for making a general impression. A feeble and hesitating manner bespeaks always some distrust of a man's own opinion ; which is by no means a favourable circumstance for his inducing others to embrace it.

These are the chief thoughts which have occurred to me from reflection and observation, concerning the peculiar distinguishing characters of the eloquence proper for popular assemblies. The sum of what has been said, is this : The end of popular speaking is persuasion ; and this must be founded on conviction. Argument and reasoning must be the basis, if we would be speakers of business, and not mere declaimers. We should be engaged in earnest on the side which we espouse ; and utter, as much as possible, our own, and not counterfeited sentiments. The premeditation should be of things, rather than of words. Clear order and method should be studied : the manner and expression warm and animated ; though still, in the midst of that vehemence, which may at times be suitable, carried under the proper restraints which regard to the audience, and to the

decorum of character, ought to lay on every public speaker : the style free and easy ; strong and descriptive, rather than diffuse ; and the delivery determined and firm. To conclude this head, let every orator remember, that the impression made by fine and artful speaking is momentary ; that made by argument and good sense, is solid and lasting.

I shall now, that I may afford an exemplification of that species of oratory of which I have been treating, insert some extracts from Demosthenes. Even under the great disadvantage of an English translation, they will exhibit a small specimen of that vigorous and spirited eloquence which I have so often praised. I shall take my extracts mostly from the Philippics and Olynthiacs, which were entirely popular orations spoken to the general convention of the citizens of Athens : and, as the subject of both the Philippics, and the Olynthiacs, is the same, I shall not confine myself to one oration, but shall join together passages taken from two or three of them ; such as may shew his general strain of speaking, on some of the chief branches of the subject. The subject in general is, to rouse the Athenians to guard against Philip of Macedon, whose growing power and crafty policy had by that time endangered, and soon after overwhelmed the liberties of Greece. The Athenians began to be alarmed ; but their deliberations were slow, and their measures feeble ; several of their

favourite orators having been gained by Philip's bribes to favour his cause. In this critical conjuncture of affairs Demosthenes arose. In the following manner he begins his first Philippic; which, like the exordiums of all his orations, is simple and artless *.

“ Had we been convened, Athenians ! on some new subject of debate, I had waited till most of your usual counsellors had declared their opinions. If I had approved of what was proposed by them, I should have continued silent ; if not, I should then have attempted to speak my sentiments. But since those very points on which these speakers have oftentimes been heard already, are at this time to be considered ; though I have risen first, I presume I may expect your pardon ; for if they on former occasions had advised the proper measures, you would not have found it needful to consult at present.

“ First, then, Athenians ! however wretched the situation of our affairs at present seems, it must not by any means be thought desperate. “ What I am now going to advance may possibly appear a paradox ; yet it is a certain truth, that our past misfortunes afford a circumstance most

* In the following extracts, Leland's translation is mostly followed.

“ favourable to our future hopes *. And what is
“ that ? even that our present difficulties are ow-
“ ing entirely to our total indolence and utter dis-
“ regard of our own interest. For were we thus
“ situated, in spite of every effort which our duty
“ demanded, then indeed we might regard our
“ fortunes as absolutely desperate. But now, Philip
“ hath only conquered your supineness and inac-
“ tivity ; the state he hath not conquered. You
“ cannot be said to be defeated ; your force hath
“ never been exerted.

“ If there is a man in this assembly who thinks
“ that we must find a formidable enemy in Philip,
“ while he views on one hand the numerous
“ armies which surround him, and on the other,
“ the weakness of our state, despoiled of so much
“ of its dominions, I cannot deny that he thinks
“ justly. Yet let him reflect on this ; there was a
“ time, Athenians ! when we possessed Pydna, Po-
“ tiœ, and Melthonœ, and all that country round ;
“ when many of the states, now subjected to
“ him, were free and independent, and more in-
“ clined to our alliance than to his. If Philip, at
“ that time weak in himself, and without allies,
“ had desponded of success against you, he would
“ never have engaged in those enterprises which
“ are now crowned with success, nor could have

* This thought is only hinted in the first Philippic; but brought out more fully in the third ; as the same thoughts, occasioned by similar situations of affairs, sometimes occur in the different orations on this subject.

“ raised himself to that pitch of grandeur at
“ which you now behold him. But he knew well
“ that the strongest places are only prizes laid
“ between the combatants, and ready for the con-
“ queror. He knew that the dominions of the
“ absent devolve naturally to those who are in the
“ field ; the possessions of the supine, to the ac-
“ tive and intrepid. Animated by these senti-
“ ments, he overturns whole nations. He either
“ rules universally as a conqueror, or governs as
“ a protector. For mankind naturally seek con-
“ federacy with such as they see resolved and
“ preparing not to be wanting to themselves.

“ If you, my countrymen ! will now at length
“ be persuaded to entertain the like sentiments ; if
“ each of you will be disposed to approve himself
“ an useful citizen, to the utmost that his station
“ and abilities enable him ; if the rich will be
“ ready to contribute, and the young to take the
“ field ; in one word, if you will be yourselves,
“ and banish these vain hopes which every single
“ person entertains, that the active part of public
“ business may lie upon others, and he remain at
“ his ease ; you may then, by the assistance of the
“ gods, recal those opportunities which your su-
“ pineness hath neglected, regain your dominions,
“ and chastise the insolence of this man.

“ But when, O my countrymen ! will you be-
“ gin to exert your vigour ? Do you wait till
“ roused by some dire event ? till forced by some
“ necessity ? What then are we to think of our
“ present condition ? To free men, the disgrace

“ attending on misconduct is, in my opinion, the
“ most urgent necessity. Or say, is it your sole
“ ambition to wander through the public places,
“ each inquiring of the other, ‘ What new ad-
“ vices?’ Can any thing be more new than that
“ a man of Macedon should conquer the Athe-
“ nians, and give law to Greece? ‘ Is Philip
“ dead?’ ‘ No—but he is sick.’ Pray, what is it
“ to you whether Philip is sick or not? Suppos-
“ ing he should die, you would raise up another
“ Philip, if you continue thus regardless of your
“ interest.

“ Many, I know, delight more in nothing than
“ in circulating all the rumours they hear as arti-
“ cles of intelligence. Some cry, Philip hath
“ joined with the Lacedæmonians, and they are
“ concerting the destruction of Thebes. Others
“ assure us, he hath sent an embassy to the king
“ of Persia; others, that he is fortifying places in
“ Illyria. Thus we all go about framing our seve-
“ ral tales. I do believe, indeed, Athenians! that
“ he is intoxicated with his greatness, and does
“ entertain his imagination with many such vi-
“ sionary projects, as he sees no power rising to
“ oppose him. But I cannot be persuaded that
“ he hath so taken his measures, that the weakest
“ amongst us (for the weakest they are who spread
“ such rumours) know what he is next to do. Let
“ us disregard these tales. Let us only be per-
“ suaded of this, that he is our enemy; that we
“ have long been subject to his insolence; that
“ whatever we expected to have been done for us

“ others, hath turned against us ; that all the
“ resource left, is in ourselves ; and that if we are
“ not inclined to carry our arms abroad, we should
“ be forced to engage him at home. Let us be
“ persuaded of these things, and then we shall come
“ to a proper determination, and be no longer
“ guided by rumours. We need not be solicitous
“ to know what particular events are to happen.
“ We may be well assured that nothing good can
“ happen, unless we give due attention to our own
“ affairs, and act as becomes Athenians.

“ Were it a point generally acknowledged *,
“ that Philip is now at actual war with the state,
“ the only thing under deliberation would then be,
“ how to oppose him with most safety. But since
“ there are persons so strangely infatuated, that
“ although he has already possessed himself of a
“ considerable part of our dominions ; although
“ he is still extending his conquests ; although all
“ Greece has suffered by his injustice ; yet they
“ can hear it repeated in this assembly, that it is
“ some of us who seek to embroil the state in war :
“ this suggestion must first be guarded against. I
“ readily admit, that were it in our power to deter-
“ mine whether we should be at peace or war,
“ peace, if it depended on our option, is most de-
“ sirable to be embraced. But if the other party
“ hath drawn the sword, and gathered his armies
“ round him ; if he amuses us with the name of

* Phil. iii.

“ peace, while, in fact, he is proceeding to the
“ greatest hostilities; what is left for us but to
“ oppose him? If any man takes that for a peace,
“ which is only a preparation for his leading his
“ forces directly upon us, after his other conquests,
“ I hold that man’s mind to be disordered. At
“ least, it is only our conduct towards Philip, not
“ Philip’s conduct towards us, that is to be term-
“ ed a peace; and this is the peace for which Phi-
“ lip’s treasures are expended, for which his gold
“ is so liberally scattered smong our venal ora-
“ tors, that he may be at liberty to carry on the
“ war against you, while you make no war on
“ him.

“ Heavens! is there any man of a right mind
“ who would judge of peace or war by words, and
“ not by actions? Is there any man so weak as to
“ imagine that it is for the sake of those paltry
“ villages of Thrace, Drongylus, and Cabyle, and
“ Mastira, that Philip is now braving the utmost
“ dangers, and enduring the severity of toils and
“ seasons; and that he has no designs upon the
“ arsenals, and the navies, and the silver mines of
“ Athens? or that he will take up his winter-quar-
“ ters among the cells and dungeons of Thrace,
“ and leave you to enjoy all your revenues in
“ peace? But you wait, perhaps, till he declare
“ war against you. He will never do so; no,
“ though he were at your gates. He will still be
“ assuring you that he is not at war. Such were
“ his professions to the people of Oreum, when his

“ forces were in the heart of their country ; such
“ his professions to those of Pheræ, until the
“ moment he attacked their walls ; and thus he
“ amused the Olynthians till he came within a few
“ miles of them, and then he sent them a message,
“ that either they must quit their city, or he his
“ kingdom. He would indeed be the absurdest of
“ mankind, if, while you suffer his outrages to pass
“ unnoticed, and are wholly engaged in accusing
“ and prosecuting one another, he should, by de-
“ claring war, put an end to your private contests,
“ warn you to direct all your zeal against him, and
“ deprive his pensioners of their most specious
“ pretence for suspending your resolutions, that of
“ his not being at war with the state. I, for my
“ part, hold and declare, that by his attack of the
“ Megaræans, by his attempts upon the liberty of
“ Eubœa, by his late incursions into Thrace, by
“ his practices in Peloponnesus, Philip has vio-
“ lated the treaty ; he is in a state of hostility with
“ you ; unless you shall affirm, that he who pre-
“ pares to besiege a city, is still at peace, until the
“ walls be actually invested. The man whose
“ designs, whose whole conduct tends to reduce
“ me to subjection, that man is at war with me,
“ though not a blow hath yet been given, nor a
“ sword drawn.

“ All Greece, all the barbarian world, is too
“ narrow for this man’s ambition. And, though
“ we Greeks see and hear all this, we send no em-
“ bassies to each other ; we express no resentment ;

“ but into such wretchedness are we sunk, that
“ even to this day, we neglect what our interest
“ and duty demand. Without engaging in asso-
“ ciations, or forming confederacies, we look with
“ unconcern upon Philip's growing power; each
“ fondly imagining, that the time in which an-
“ other is destroyed, is so much time gained to
“ him; although no man can be ignorant, that,
“ like the regular periodic return of a fever, he is
“ coming upon those who think themselves the
“ most remote from danger. And what is the
“ cause of our present passive disposition? For
“ some cause sure they must be, why the Greeks,
“ who have been so zealous heretofore in defence
“ of liberty, are now so prone to slavery. The
“ cause, Athenians! is, that a principle, which was
“ formerly fixed in the minds of all, now exists no
“ more; a principle which conquered the opulence
“ of Persia, maintained the freedom of Greece,
“ and triumphed over the powers of sea and land.
“ That principle was, an unanimous abhorrence of
“ all those who accepted bribes from princes, that
“ were enemies to the liberties of Greece. To be
“ convicted of bribery, was then a crime altoge-
“ ther unpardonable. Neither orators, nor gene-
“ rals, would then sell for gold the favourable con-
“ junctures which fortune put into their hands.
“ No gold could impair our firm concord at home,
“ our hatred and diffidence of tyrants and barba-
“ rians. But now all things are exposed to sale,
“ as in a public market. Corruption has intro-

“ duced such manners, as have proved the bane
“ and destruction of our country. Is a man
“ known to have received foreign money? Peo-
“ ple envy him. Does he own it? They laugh.
“ Is he convicted in form? They forgive him:
“ so universally has this contagion diffused itself
“ among us.

“ If there be any who, though not carried away
“ by bribes, yet are struck with terror, as if Philip
“ was something more than human, they may
“ see, upon a little consideration, that he hath ex-
“ hausted all those artifices to which he owes his
“ present elevation; and that his affairs are now
“ ready to decline. For I myself, Athenians!
“ should think Philip really to be dreaded, if I
“ saw him raised by honourable means. When
“ forces join in harmony and affection, and one
“ common interest unites confederating powers,
“ then they share the toils with alacrity, and en-
“ dure distresses with perseverance. But when
“ extravagant ambition and lawless power, as in
“ the case of Philip, have aggrandized a single
“ person, the first pretence, the slightest accident,
“ overthrows him, and dashes his greatness to the
“ ground. For, it is not possible Athenians! it
“ is not possible, to found a lasting power upon
“ injustice, perjury, and treachery. These may
“ perhaps succeed for once, and borrow for a
“ while, from hope, a gay and flourishing appear-
“ ance. But time betrays their weakness, and
“ they fall of themselves to ruin. For, as in

“ structures of every kind, the lower parts should
“ have the firmest stability, so the grounds and
“ principles of great enterprises should be justice
“ and truth. But this solid foundation is wanting
“ to all the enterprises of Philip.

“ Hence, among his confederates, there are
“ many who hate, who distrust, who envy him. If
“ you will exert yourselves, as your honour and
“ your interest require, you will not only discover
“ the weakness and insincerity of his confederates,
“ but the ruinous condition also of his own king-
“ dom. For you are not to imagine, that the in-
“ clinations of his subjects are the same with those
“ of their prince. He thirsts for glory; but they
“ have no part in this ambition. Harassed by
“ those various excursions he is ever making, they
“ groan under perpetual calamity; torn from their
“ business and their families; and beholding com-
“ merce excluded from their coasts. All those
“ glaring exploits, which have given him his
“ apparent greatness, have wasted his natural
“ strength, his own kingdom, and rendered it
“ much weaker than it originally was. Besides,
“ his profligacy and baseness, and those troops of
“ buffoons and dissolute persons, whom he caresses
“ and keeps constantly about him, are, to men of
“ just discernment, great indications of the weak-
“ ness of his mind. At present, his successes cast
“ a shade over these things; but let his arms
“ meet with the least disgrace, his feebleness will
“ appear, and his character be exposed. For, as

“ in our bodies, while a man is in apparent health,
“ the effect of some inward debility, which has
“ been growing upon him, may, for a time, be
“ concealed ; but, as soon as it comes the length
“ of disease, all his secret infirmities show them-
“ selves in whatever part of his frame the disorder
“ is lodged ; so, in states and monarchies, while
“ they carry on a war abroad, many defects escape
“ the general eye ; but, as soon as war reaches
“ their own territory, their infirmities come forth
“ to general observation.

“ Fortune has great influence in all human
“ affairs ; but I, for my part, should prefer the
“ fortune of Athens, with the least degree of vi-
“ gour in asserting your cause, to this man's for-
“ tune. For we have many better reasons to de-
“ pend upon the favour of Heaven than this man.
“ But, indeed, he who will not exert his own
“ strength, hath no title to depend either on his
“ friends, or on the gods. Is it at all surprising
“ that he, who is himself ever amidst the labours
“ and dangers of the field ; who is everywhere ;
“ whom no opportunity escapes ; to whom no sea-
“ son is unfavourable ; should be superior to you,
“ who are wholly engaged in contriving delays,
“ and framing decrees, and inquiring after news?
“ The contrary would be much more surprising,
“ if we, who have never hitherto acted as became
“ a state engaged in war, should conquer one who
“ acts, in every instance, with indefatigable vigi-

“ lance. It is this, Athenians ! it is this which
“ gives him all his advantage against you. Philip,
“ constantly surrounded by his troops, and per-
“ petually engaged in projecting his designs, can,
“ in a moment, strike the blow where he pleases.
“ But we, when any accident alarms us, first ap-
“ point our Trierarchs ; then we allow them to ex-
“ change by substitution : then the supplies are
“ considered ; next, we resolve to man our fleet
“ with strangers and foreigners ; then find it ne-
“ cessary to supply their place ourselves. In the
“ midst of these delays, what we are sailing to de-
“ fend, the enemy is already master of; for the
“ time of action is spent by us in preparing ; and
“ the issues of war will not wait for our slow and
“ irresolute measures.

“ Consider then your present situation, and
“ make such provision as the urgent danger re-
“ quires. Talk not of your ten thousands, or
“ your twenty thousand foreigners ; of those ar-
“ mies which appear so magnificent on paper
“ only ; great and terrible in your decrees, in ex-
“ ecution weak and contemptible. But let your
“ army be made up chiefly of the native forces of
“ the state ; let it be an Athenian strength to
“ which you are to trust ; and whomsoever you
“ appoint as general, let them be entirely un-
“ der his guidance and authority. For, ever
“ since our armies have been formed of fo-
“ reigners alone, their victories have been gained

“ over our allies and confederates only, while
“ our enemies have risen to an extravagance of
“ power.”

The orator goes on to point out the number of forces which should be raised ; the places of their destination ; the season of the year in which they should set out ; and then proposes in form his motion, as we would call it, or his decree, for the necessary supply of money, and for ascertaining the funds from which it should be raised. Having finished all that relates to the business under deliberation, he concludes these orations on public affairs, commonly with no longer peroration than the following, which terminates the first Philippic : “ I, for my part, have never, upon any occasion, chosen to court your favour, by speaking any thing but what I was convinced would serve you. And, on this occasion, you have heard my sentiments freely declared, without art, and without reserve. I should have been pleased, indeed, that, as it is for your advantage, to have your true interest laid before you, so I might have been assured, that he who layeth it before you would share the advantage. But, uncertain as I know the consequence to be with respect to myself, I yet determined to speak, because I was convinced that these measures, if pursued, must prove beneficial to the public. And, of all those opinions which shall be offered to your acceptance, may the gods determine

“ that to be chosen which will best advance the
“ general welfare.”

These extracts may serve to give some imperfect idea of the manner of Demosthenes. For a juster and more complete one, recourse must be had to the excellent original.

LECTURE XXVIII.

ELOQUENCE OF THE BAR—ANALYSIS OF CICERO'S ORATION FOR CLUENTIUS.

I TREATED, in the last Lecture, of what is peculiar to the eloquence of popular assemblies. Much of what was said on that head is applicable to the eloquence of the Bar, the next great scene of public speaking to which I now proceed, and my observations upon which will therefore be the shorter. All, however, that was said in the former Lecture must not be applied to it ; and it is of importance, that I begin with shewing where the distinction lies.

In the first place, the ends of speaking at the Bar, and in popular assemblies, are commonly different. In popular assemblies, the great object is persuasion ; the orator aims at determining the hearers to some choice or conduct, as good, fit, or useful. For accomplishing this end, it is incumbent on him to apply himself to all the principles of action in our nature ; to the passions and to the

heart, as well as to the understanding. But, at the Bar, conviction is the great object. There, it is not the speaker's business to persuade the judges to what is good or useful, but to shew them what is just and true ; and, of course, it is chiefly, or solely, to the understanding that his eloquence is addressed. This is a characteristical difference which ought ever to be kept in view.

In the next place, speakers at the Bar address themselves to one or to a few judges, and these, too, persons generally of age, gravity, and authority of character. There they have not those advantages which a mixed and numerous assembly affords for employing all the arts of speech, even supposing their subject to admit them. Passion does not rise so easily ; the speaker is heard more coolly ; he is watched over more severely ; and would expose himself to ridicule, by attempting that high vehement tone, which is only proper in speaking to a multitude.

In the last place, the nature and management of the subjects which belong to the Bar, require a very different species of oratory from that of popular assemblies. In the latter, the speaker has a much wider range. He is seldom confined to any precise rule ; he can fetch his topics from a great variety of quarters ; and employ every illustration which his fancy or imagination suggests. But, at the Bar, the field of speaking is

limited to precise law and statute. Imagination is not allowed to takes its scope. The advocate has always lying before him the line, the square, and the compass. These, it is his principal business to be uniformly applying to the subjects under debate.

For these reasons, it is clear, that the eloquence of the Bar is of a much more limited, more sober and chastened kind than that of popular assemblies; and, for similar reasons, we must beware of considering even the judicial orations of Cicero or Demosthenes as exact models of the manner of speaking, which is adapted to the present state of the Bar. It is necessary to warn young lawyers of this; because, though these were pleadings spoken in civil or criminal causes, yet, in fact the nature of the Bar anciently, both in Greece and Rome, allowed a much nearer approach to popular eloquence, than what it now does. This was owing chiefly to two causes.

First, Because in the ancient judicial orations, strict law was much less an object of attention than it is become among us. In the days of Demosthenes and Cicero, the municipal statutes were few, simple, and general; and the decision of causes was trusted, in a great measure, to the equity and common sense of the judges. Eloquence, much more than jurisprudence, was the study of those who were to plead causes. Cicero

somewhere says, that three months study was sufficient to make any man a complete civilian ; nay, it was thought that one might be a good pleader at the Bar, who had never studied law at all. For there were among the Romans a set of men called *Pragmatici*, whose office it was to give the orator all the law knowledge which the cause he was to plead required, and which he put into that popular form, and dressed up with those colours of eloquence, that were best fitted for influencing the judges before whom he spoke.

We may observe next, that the civil and criminal judges, both in Greece and Rome, were commonly much more numerous than they are with us, and formed a sort of popular assembly. The renowned tribunal of the Areopagus at Athens consisted of fifty judges at the least *. Some make it to consist of a great many more. When Socrates was condemned, by what court it is uncertain, we are informed that no fewer than 280 voted against him. In Rome, the *Prætor*, who was the proper judge both in civil and criminal causes, named for every cause of moment, the *Judices Selecti*, as they were called, who were always numerous, and had the office and power of both judge and jury. In the famous cause of Milo, Cicero spoke to fifty-one *Judices Selecti*, and so

* Vide Potter Antiq. vol. i. p. 102.

had the advantage of addressing his whole pleading, not to one or a few learned judges of the point of law, as is the case with us, but to an assembly of Roman citizens. Hence all those arts of popular eloquence, which we find the Roman orator so frequently employing, and probably with much success. Hence tears and commiseration are so often made use of as the instruments of gaining a cause. Hence certain practices, which would be reckoned theatrical among us, were common at the Roman Bar : such as introducing not only the accused person dressed in deep mourning, but presenting to the judges his family, and his young children, endeavouring to move them by their cries and tears.

For these reasons, on account of the wide difference between the ancient and modern state of the Bar, to which we may add also the difference in the turn of ancient and modern eloquence, which I formerly took notice of, too strict an imitation of Cicero's manner of pleading would now be extremely injudicious. To great advantage he may still be studied by every speaker at the Bar. In the address with which he opens his subject, and the insinuation he employs for gaining the favour of the judges ; in the distinct arrangement of his facts ; in the gracefulness of his narration ; in the conduct and exposition of his arguments, he may and he ought to be imitated. A higher pattern cannot be set before us ; but one who

should imitate him also in his exaggeration and amplifications, in his diffuse and pompous declamation, and in his attempts to raise passion, would now make himself almost as ridiculous at the Bar, as if he should appear there in the *Toga* of a Roman lawyer.

Before I descend to more particular directions concerning the eloquence of the Bar, I must be allowed to take notice, that the foundation of a lawyer's reputation and success must always be laid in a profound knowledge of his own profession. Nothing is of such consequence to him, or deserves more his deep and serious study. For whatever his abilities as a speaker may be, if his knowledge of the law be reckoned superficial, few will choose to commit their cause to him. Besides previous study, and a proper stock of knowledge attained, another thing highly material to the success of every pleader, is a diligent and painful attention to every cause with which he is entrusted, so as to be thoroughly master of all the facts and circumstances relating to it. On this the ancient rhetoricians insist with great earnestness, and justly represent it as a necessary basis to all the eloquence that can be exerted in pleading. Cicero tells us (under the character of Antonius, in the second book *De Oratore*), that he always conversed at full length with every client who came to consult him; that he took care there should be no witness to their conversation, in order that his

client might explain himself more freely ; that he was wont to start every objection, and to plead the cause of the adverse party with him, that he might come at the whole truth, and be fully prepared on every point of the business ; and that, after the client had retired, he used to balance all the facts with himself, under three different characters, his own, that of the judge, and that of the advocate on the opposite side. He censures very severely those of the profession who declined taking so much trouble ; taxing them not only with shameful negligence, but with dishonesty and breach of trust *. To the same purpose Quintilian, in the eighth chapter of his last book, delivers a great many excellent rules concerning all the methods which a lawyer should employ for attaining the most thorough knowledge of the cause he is to plead ; again and again recommending patience and attention in conversation with clients, and observing very sensibly, “*Non tam obest audire supervacua, quam igno-*

* “ Evidem soleo dare, operam, ut de sua quisque re me ipse
“ doceat ; et nequis alius adsit, quo liberius loquatur ; et agere
“ adversarii causam, ut ille agat suam ; et quicquid de sua re co-
“ gitaret, in medium proferat. Itaque cum ille decessit, tres per-
“ sonas unus sustineo, summa animi equitate ; meam, adversarii,
“ judicis.—Nonnulli dum operam suam multam existimari vo-
“ lunt, ut toto foro volitare, et accusa ad causa m ire videantur,
“ causas dicunt incognitas. In quo est illa quidem magna offend-
“ sio, vel negligentiae susceptis rebus, vel perfidiae receptis ; sed
“ etiam illa, major opinione, quod nemo potest de ea re quam non
“ nevit, non turpissime decere.”

“ rare necessaria. Frequenter enim et vulnus, et
“ remedium, in iis orator inveniet quæ litigatori
“ in neutram partem, habere momentum vide-
“ bantur *.”

Supposing an advocate to be thus prepared, with all the knowledge which the study of the law in general, and of that cause which he is to plead in particular, can furnish him, I must next observe, that eloquence in pleading is of the highest moment for giving support to a cause. It were altogether wrong to infer, that because the ancient popular and vehement manner of pleading is now in a great measure superseded, there is, therefore, no room for eloquence at the Bar, and that the study of it is become superfluous. Though the manner of speaking be changed, yet still there is a right and a proper manner, which deserves to be studied as much as ever. Perhaps there is no scene of public speaking where eloquence is more necessary. For, on other occasions, the subject on which men speak in public, is frequently sufficient, by itself, to interest the hearers. But the dryness and subtilty of the subjects generally agitated at the Bar, require, more than any other, a certain

* “ To listen to something that is superfluous can do no hurt ; whereas to be ignorant of something that is material, may be highly prejudicial. The advocate will frequently discover the weak side of a cause, and learn, at the same time, what is the proper defence, from circumstances which, to the party himself, appeared to be of little or no moment.”

kind of eloquence in order to command attention ; in order to give proper weight to the arguments that are employed, and to prevent any thing which the pleader advances from passing unregarded. The effect of good speaking is always very great. There is as much difference in the impression made upon the hearers, by a cold, dry, and confused speaker, and that made by one who pleads the same cause with elegance, order, and strength, as there is between our conception of an object, when it is presented to us in a dim light, and when we behold it in a full and clear one.

It is no small encouragement to eloquence at the bar, that of all liberal professions, none gives fairer play to genius and abilities than that of the advocate. He is less exposed than some others to suffer by the arts of rivalry, by popular, prejudices, or secret intrigues. He is sure of coming forward according to his merit ; for he stands forth every day to view ; he enters the list boldly with his competitors ; every appearance which he makes is an appeal to the public ; whose decision seldom fails of being just, because it is impartial. Interest and friends may set forward a young pleader with peculiar advantages beyond others, at the beginning ; but they can do no more than open the field to him. A reputation resting on these assistances will soon fall. Spectators remark, judges decide, parties watch ; and to him will the multitude of clients never fail to resort, who gives

the most approved specimens of his knowledge, eloquence, and industry.

It must be laid down for a first principle, that the eloquence suited to the Bar, whether in speaking, or in writing law papers, is of the calm and temperate kind, and connected with close reasoning. Sometimes a little play may be allowed to the imagination, in order to enliven a dry subject, and to give relief to the fatigue of attention ; but this liberty must be taken with a sparing hand. For a florid style, and a sparkling manner, never fail to make the speaker be heard with a jealous ear by the judge. They detract from his weight, and always produce a suspicion of his failing in soundness and strength of argument. It is purity and neatness of expression which is chiefly to be studied ; a style perspicuous and proper, which shall not be needlessly overcharged with the pedantry of law terms, and where, at the same time, no affectation shall appear of avoiding these, when they are suitable and necessary.

Verbosity is a common fault, of which the gentlemen of this profession are accused ; and into which the habit of speaking and writing so hastily, and with so little preparation, as they are often obliged to do, almost unavoidably betrays them. It cannot, therefore, be too much recommended to those who are beginning to practise at the Bar, that they should early study to guard

against this, while as yet they have full leisure for preparation. Let them form themselves, especially in the papers which they write, to the habit of a strong and a correct style; which expresses the same thing much better in a few words, than is done by the accumulation of intricate and endless periods. If this habit be once acquired, it will become natural to them afterwards, when the multiplicity of business shall force them to compose in a more precipitant manner. Whereas, if the practice of a loose and negligent style has been suffered to become familiar, it will not be in their power, even upon occasions when they wish to make an unusual effort, to express themselves with energy and grace.

Distinctness is a capital property in speaking at the Bar. This should be shewn chiefly in two things: first, in stating the question; in shewing clearly what is the point in debate; what we admit; what we deny; and where the line of division begins between us and the adverse party. Next, it should be shewn in the order and arrangement of all the parts of the pleading. In every sort of oration, a clear method is of the utmost consequence; but in those embroiled and difficult cases which belong to the bar, it is almost all in all. Too much pains, therefore, cannot be taken in previously studying the plan and method. If there be indistinctness and disorder there, we can have no success in convincing; we leave the whole cause in darkness.

With respect to the conduct of narration and argumentation, I shall hereafter make several remarks, when I come to treat of the component parts of a regular oration. I shall at present only observe, that the narration of facts at the Bar, should always be as concise as the nature of them will admit. Facts are always of the greatest consequence to be remembered during the course of the pleading; but if the pleader be tedious in his manner of relating them, and needlessly circumstantial, he lays too great a load upon the memory. Whereas, by cutting off all superfluous circumstances in his recital, he adds strength to the material facts: he both gives a clearer view of what he relates, and makes the impression of it more lasting. In argumentation, again, I would incline to give scope to a more diffuse manner at the Bar, than on some other occasions. For, in popular assemblies, where the subject of debate is often a plain question, arguments, taken from known topics, gain strength by their conciseness. But the obscurity of law points frequently requires the arguments to be spread out, and placed in different lights, in order to be fully apprehended.

When the pleader comes to refute the arguments employed by his adversary, he should be on his guard not to do them injustice, by disguising or placing them in a false light. The deceit is soon discovered: it will not fail of being exposed; and tends to impress the judge and the hearers

with distrust of the speaker, as one who either wants discernment to perceive, or wants fairness to admit the strength of the reasoning on the other side. Whereas, when they see that he states, with accuracy and candour, the arguments which have been used against him, before he proceeds to combat them, a strong prejudice is created in his favour. They are naturally led to think, that he has a clear and full conception of all that can be said on both sides of the argument; that he has entire confidence in the goodness of his own cause; and does not attempt to support it by any artifice or concealment. The judge is thereby inclined to receive much more readily the impressions which are given him by a speaker, who appears both so fair and so penetrating. There is no part of the discourse, in which the orator has greater opportunity of shewing a masterly address, than when he sets himself to represent the reasonings of his antagonists, in order to refute them.

Wit may sometimes be of service at the Bar, especially in a lively reply, by which we may throw ridicule on something that has been said on the other side. But though the reputation of wit be dazzling to a young pleader, I would never advise him to rest his strength upon this talent. It is not his business to make an audience laugh, but to convince the judge; and seldom or never did any one rise to eminence in his profession, by being a witty lawyer.

A proper degree of warmth in pleading a cause is always of use. Though, in speaking to a multitude, greater vehemence be natural ; yet, in addressing ourselves even to a single man, the warmth which arises from seriousness and earnestness, is one of the most powerful means of persuading him. An advocate personates his client ; he has taken upon him the whole charge of his interests ; he stands in his place. It is improper, therefore, and has a bad effect upon the cause, if he appears indifferent and unmoved ; and few clients will be fond of trusting their interests in the hands of a cold speaker.

At the same time, he must beware of prostituting his earnestness and sensibility so much as to enter with equal warmth into every cause that is committed to him, whether it can be supposed really to excite his zeal or not. There is a dignity of character, which it is of the utmost importance for every one in this profession to support. For it must never be forgotten, that there is no instrument of persuasion more powerful, than an opinion of probity and honour in the person who undertakes to persuade *. It is scarcely possible for any hearer to separate altogether the impression made by the character of him that speaks, from the things

* “ Plurimum ad omnia momenti est in hoc positum, si vir
“ bonus creditur. Sic enim contingit, ut non studium advocati,
“ videatur afferre, sed pene testis fidem.”

that he says. However secretly and imperceptibly, it will be always lending its weight to one side or other ; either detracting from, or adding to, the authority and influence of his speech. This opinion of honour and probity must therefore be carefully preserved, both by some degree of delicacy in the choice of causes, and by the manner of conducting them. And though, perhaps, the nature of the profession may render it extremely difficult to carry this delicacy its utmost length, yet there are attentions to this point, which, as every good man for virtue's sake, so every prudent man for reputation's sake, will find to be necessary. He will always decline embarking in causes that are odious and manifestly unjust ; and, when he supports a doubtful cause, he will lay the chief stress upon such arguments as appear to his own judgment the most tenable ; reserving his zeal and his indignation for cases where injustice and iniquity are flagrant. But of the personal qualities and virtues requisite in public speakers, I shall afterwards have occasion to discourse.

These are the chief directions which have occurred to me concerning the peculiar strain of speaking at the bar. In order to illustrate the subject farther, I shall give a short analysis of one of Cicero's pleadings, or judicial orations. I have chosen that, *pro Cluentio*. The celebrated one, *pro Milone*, is more laboured and showy ; but it is too declamatory. That, *pro Cluentio*, comes nearer the strain of a modern pleading ; and though it

has the disadvantage of being very long, and complicated too in the subject, yet it is one of the most chaste, correct, and forcible of all Cicero's judicial orations, and well deserves attention for its conduct.

Avitus Cluentius, a Roman knight of splendid family and fortunes, had accused his stepfather Oppianicus of an attempt to poison him. He prevailed in the prosecution; Oppianicus was condemned and banished. But as rumours arose of the judges having been corrupted by money in this cause, these gave occasion to much popular clamour, and had thrown a heavy odium on Cluentius. Eight years afterwards Oppianicus died. An accusation was brought against Cluentius of having poisoned him, together with a charge also of having bribed the judges in the former trial to condemn him. In this action Cicero defends him. The accusers were Sappia, the mother of Cluentius, and widow of Oppianicus, and young Oppianicus, the son. Q. Naso, the Praetor, was judge, together with a considerable number of *Judices Selecti*.

The introduction of the oration is simple and proper, taken from no common-place topic, but from the nature of the cause. It begins with taking notice, that the whole oration of the accuser was divided into two parts *. These two parts

* "Animadverte, judices, omnem accusatoris orationem in duas
"divisam esse partes; quarum altera mihi nisi et magnopere con-

were, the charge of having poisoned Oppianicus; on which the accuser, conscious of having no proof, did not lay the stress of his cause; but rested it chiefly on the other charge of formerly corrupting the judges, which was capital in certain cases by the Roman law. Cicero purposes to follow him in this method, and to apply himself chiefly to the vindication of his client from the latter charge. He makes several proper observations on the danger of judges suffering themselves to be swayed by a popular cry, which often is raised by faction, and directed against the innocent. He acknowledges that Cluentius had suffered much and long by reproach, on account of what had passed at the former trial; but begs only a patient and attentive hearing, and assures the judges, that he will state every thing relating to that matter so fairly and so clearly, as shall give them entire satisfaction. A great appearance of candour reigns throughout this introduction.

The crimes with which Cluentius was charged, were heinous. A mother accusing her son, and accusing him of such actions, as having first bribed

“ fidere videbatur, invidiâ jam inveterata judicij Juniani, altera
“ tantummodo consuetudinis causâ, timidè et diffidenter attingere
“ rationem beneficii criminum; quâ de re lege est hæc questio
“ constituta. Itaque mihi certum est hanc eandem distributionem
“ invidiæ et criminum sic in defensione servare, ut omnes intelli-
“ gant, nihil me nec subterfugere voluisse reticendo, nec obscu-
“ rare dicendo.”

judges to condemn her husband, and having afterwards poisoned him, were circumstances that naturally raised strong prejudices against Cicero's client. The first step, therefore, necessary for the orator, was to remove these prejudices; by showing what sort of persons Cluentius's mother, and her husband Oppianicus were; and thereby turning the edge of public indignation against them. The nature of the cause rendered this plan altogether proper, and in similar situations it is fit to be imitated. He executes his plan with much eloquence and force; and, in doing it, lays open such a scene of infamy and complicated guilt, as gives a shocking picture of the manners of that age; and such as would seem incredible, did not Cicero refer to the proof that was taken in the former trial, of the facts which he alleges.

Sassia, the mother, appears to have been altogether of an abandoned character. Soon after the death of her first husband, the father of Cluentius, she fell in love with Aurius Melinus, a young man of illustrious birth and great fortune, who was married to her own daughter. She prevailed with him to divorce her daughter, and then she married him herself*. This Melinus being after-

* "Lectum illum genialem quem biennio ante filiae suae nubenti
"straverat, in eadem domo sibi ornari et sterni, expulsâ atque
"exturbatâ filia, jubet. Nubit genero socrus, nullis auspiciibus
"funestis omnibus omnium. O mulieris scelus incredibile,

wards, by the means of Oppianicus, involved in Sylla's proscription, and put to death ; and Sassia being left, for the second time, a widow, and in a very opulent situation, Oppianicus himself made his addresses to her. She, not startled at the impudence of the proposal, nor at the thoughts of marrying one, whose hands had been imbrued in her former husband's blood, objected only, as Cicero says, to Oppianicus having two sons by his present wife. Oppianicus removed the objection, by having his sons privately dispatched ; and then divorcing his wife, the infamous match was concluded between him and Sassia. These flagrant deeds are painted, as we may well believe, with the highest colours of Cicero's eloquence, which here has a very proper field. Cluentius, as a man of honour, could no longer live on any tolerable terms with a woman, a mother only in the name, who had loaded herself and all her family with so much dishonour ; and hence the feud which had ever since subsisted between them, and had involved her unfortunate son in so much trouble and

“ et præter hanc unam, in omni vita inauditum ! O audaciam
“ singularem ! non timuisse, si minus vim deorum, hominumque
“ famam, at illam ipsam noctem, facesque illas nuptiales ? non
“ limen cubiculi ? non cubile filiæ ? non parietes denique ipsos
“ superiorum testes nuptiarum ? perfregit ac prostravit omnia
“ cupiditate et furore ? vicit pudorem libido ; timorem audacia ;
“ rationem amentia.” The warmth of Cicero's eloquence,
which this passage beautifully exemplifies, is here fully justified
by the subject.

persecution. As for Oppianicus, Cicero gives a sort of history of his life, and a full detail of his crimes ; and by what he relates, Oppianicus appears to have been a man daring, fierce, and cruel, insatiable in avarice and ambition ; trained and hardened in all the crimes which those turbulent times of Marius and Sylla's proscriptions produced ; " Such a man," says our orator, " as, in place of " being surprised that he was condemned, you " ought rather to wonder that he had escaped so " long."

And now, having prepared the way by all this narration, which is clear and elegant, he enters on the history of that famous trial in which his client was charged with corrupting the judges. Both Cluentius and Oppianicus were of the city of Larinum. In a public contest about the rights of the freemen of that city, they had taken opposite sides, which embittered the misunderstanding already subsisting between them. Sassia, now the wife of Oppianicus, pushed him on to the destruction of her son, whom she had long hated, as one who was conscious of her crimes ; and as Cluentius was known to have made no will, they expected, upon his death, to succeed to his fortune. The plan was formed, therefore, to dispatch him by poison ; which, considering their former conduct, is no incredible part of the story. Cluentius was at that time indisposed ; the servant of his physician was to be bribed to give him poison, and one Fabricius,

an intimate friend of Oppianicus, was employed in the negociation. The servant having made the discovery, Cluentius first prosecuted Scamander, a freedman of Fabricius, in whose custody the poison was found ; and afterwards Fabricius, for this attempt upon his life. He prevailed in both actions : and both these persons were condemned by the voices, almost unanimous, of the judges.

Of both these *prejudicia*, as our author calls them, or previous trials, he gives a very particular account ; and rests upon them a great part of his argument, as, in neither of them, there was the least charge or suspicion of any attempt to corrupt the judges. But in both these trials, Oppianicus was pointed at plainly ; in both, Scamander and Fabricius were prosecuted as only the instruments and ministers of his cruel designs. As a natural consequence, therefore, Cluentius immediately afterwards raised a third prosecution against Oppianicus himself, the contriver and author of the whole. It was in this prosecution, that money was said to have been given to the judges ; all Rome was filled with the report of it, and the alarm loudly raised, that no man's life or liberty was safe, if such dangerous practices were not checked. By the following arguments, Cicero defends his client against this heavy charge of the *Crimen corrupti Judicii*.

He reasons first, that there was not the least

reason to suspect it; seeing the condemnation of Oppianicus was a direct and necessary consequence of the judgments given against Scamander and Fabricius in the two former trials; trials, that were fair and uncorrupted, to the satisfaction of the whole world. Yet by these, the road was laid clearly open to the detection of Oppianicus's guilt. His instruments and ministers being once condemned, and by the very same judges too, nothing could be more absurd than to raise a cry about an innocent person being circumvented by bribery, when it was evident, on the contrary, that a guilty person was now brought into judgment, under such circumstances, that unless the judges were altogether inconsistent with themselves, it was impossible for him to be acquitted.

He reasons next, that, if in this trial there were any corruption of the judges by money, it was infinitely more probable, that corruption should have proceeded from Oppianicus than from Cluentius. For, setting aside the difference of character between the two men, the one fair, the other flagitious; what motive had Cluentius to try so odious and dangerous an experiment, as that of bribing judges? Was it not much more likely that he should have had recourse to this last remedy, who saw and knew himself and his cause to be in the utmost danger; than the other, who had a cause clear in itself, and of the issue of which, in consequence of the two previous sentences given by

the same judges, he had full reason to be confident? Was it not much more likely, that he should bribe, who had every thing to fear; whose life and liberty, and fortune were at stake; than he who had already prevailed in a material part of his charge, and who had no further interest in the issue of the prosecution, than as justice was concerned?

In the third place, he asserts it as a certain fact, that Oppianicus did attempt to bribe the judges; that the corruption in this trial, so much complained of, was employed, not by Cluentius, but against him. He calls on Titus Attius, the orator on the opposite side; he challenges him to deny, if he can, or if he dare, that Stalenus, one of the thirty-two *Judices Selecti*, did receive money from Oppianicus; he names the sum that was given; he names the persons that were present, when, after the trial was over, Stalenus was obliged to refund the bribe. This is a strong fact, and would seem quite decisive. But, unluckily, a very cross circumstance occurs here. For this very Stalenus gave his voice to condemn Oppianicus. For this strange incident Cicero accounts in the following manner: Stalenus, says he, known to be a worthless man, and accustomed before to the like practices, entered into a treaty with Oppianicus to bring him off, and demanded for that purpose a certain sum, which he undertook to distribute among a competent number of the other judges.

When he was once in possession of the money; when he found a greater treasure, than ever he had been master of, deposited in his empty and wretched habitation, he became very unwilling to part with any of it to his colleagues, and bethought himself of some means by which he could contrive to keep it all to himself. The scheme which he devised for this purpose, was to promote the condemnation, instead of the acquittal of Oppianicus; as, from a condemned person, he did not apprehend much danger of being called to account, or being obliged to make restitution. Instead, therefore, of endeavouring to gain any of his colleagues, he irritated such as he had influence with against Oppianicus, by first promising them money in his name, and afterwards telling them that Oppianicus had cheated him *. When sentence was to be pronounced, he had taken measures for being absent himself; but being brought by Oppianicus's lawyer from another court, and obliged to give

* Cum esset egens, sumptuosus, audax, callidus, perfidiosus,
 " et cum domi suæ, miserrimis in locis, et inanissimis, tantum
 " nummorum positum viderit, ad omnem malitiam et fraudem
 " versare mentem suam, cœpit. Demne judicibus? mihi igitur
 " ipsi præter periculum et infamiam quid queretur? Siquis eum
 " forte casus ex periculo eripuerit, nonne reddendum est? præci-
 " pitantem igitur impellamus, inquit, et perditum prosternamus.
 " Capit hoc consilium et pecuniam quibusdam judicibus levissi-
 " mis polliceatur, deinde eam postea supprimat, ut quoniam gra-
 " ves homines suâ sponte severè judicaturos putabat, hos qui le-
 " viores erant, destitutione iratos Oppianico redderet."

his voice, he found it necessary to lead the way, in condemning the man whose money he had taken, without fulfilling the bargain which he had made with him.

By these plausible facts and reasonings, the character of Cluentius seems in a great measure cleared ; and, what Cicero chiefly intended, the odium thrown upon the adverse party. But a difficult part of the orator's business still remained. There were several subsequent decisions of the prætor, the censors, and the senate, against the judges in this cause ; which all proceeded, or seemed to proceed, upon this ground of bribery and corruption ; for it is plain the suspicion prevailed, that if Oppianicus had given money to Stalenus, Cluentius had out-bribed him. To all these decisions, however, Cicero replies with much distinctness and stibilty of argument ; though it might be tedious to follow him through all his reasonings on these heads. He shows, that the facts were, at that time, very indistinctly known ; that the decisions appealed to were hastily given ; that not one of them concluded directly against his client ; and that, such as they were, they were entirely brought about by the inflammatory and factious harangues of Quintius, the tribune of the people, who had been the agent and advocate of Oppianicus ; and who, enraged at the defeat he had sustained, had employed all his tribunitial influence to raise a storm against the judges who condemned his client.

At length, Cicero comes to reason concerning the point of law. The *Crimen Corrupti Judicij*, or the bribing of judges, was capital. In the famous *Lex Cornelia de Sicariis*, was contained this clause (which we find still extant, Panedict. lib. xlviii. tit. 10. § 1.) : “Qui judicem corruperit, vel corrum-
“ pendum curaverit, hâc lege teneatur.” This clause, however, we learn from Cicero, was restricted to magistrates and senators; and as Cluentius was only of the equestrian order, he was not, even supposing him guilty, within the law. Of this Cicero avails himself doubly ; and as he shows here the most masterly address, I shall give a summary of his pleading on this part of the cause : “ You,” says he, to the advocate for the prosecutor, “ you, T. Attius, I know, had everywhere “ given it out, that I was to defend my client, “ not from facts, not upon the footing of innocence, but by taking advantage merely of the “ law in his behalf. Have I done so? I appeal “ to yourself. Have I sought to cover him behind a legal defence only ? On the contrary, “ have I not pleaded his cause as if he had been “ a senator, liable, by the Cornelian law, to be “ capitally convicted ; and shown, that neither “ proof nor probable presumption lies against his “ innocence ? In doing so, I must acquaint you, “ that I have complied with the desire of Cluentius himself. For when he first consulted me in this cause, and when I informed him that it was “ clear no action could be brought against him

“ from the Cornelian law, he instantly besought
“ and obtested me, that I would not rest his de-
“ fence upon that ground ; saying, with tears in
“ his eyes, That his reputation was as dear to him
“ as his life ; and that what he sought as an inno-
“ cent man, was not only to be absolved from any
“ penalty, but to be acquitted in the opinion of
“ all his fellow-citizens.

“ Hitherto, then, I have pleaded this cause
“ upon his plan. But my client must forgive me,
“ if now I shall plead it upon my own. For I
“ should be wanting to myself, and to that regard
“ which my character and station require me to
“ bear the laws of the state, if I should allow
“ any person to be judged of by a law which does
“ not bind him. You, Attius, indeed, have told
“ us, that it was a scandal and reproach, that a
“ Roman knight should be exempted from those
“ penalties to which a senator, for corrupting
“ judges, is liable. But I must tell you, that it
“ would be a much greater reproach, in a state
“ that is regulated by law, to depart from the law.
“ What safety have any of us in our persons, what
“ security for our rights, if the law shall be set
“ aside ? By what title do you, Q. Naso, sit in
“ that chair, and preside in this judgment ? By
“ what right, T. Attius, do you accuse, or do I
“ defend ? Whence all the solemnity and pomp
“ of judges, and clerks, and officers, of which this
“ house is full ? Does not all proceed from the

“ law, which regulates the whole departments of
 “ the state; which, as a common bond, holds its
 “ members together; and, like the soul within
 “ the body, actuates and directs all the public
 “ functions *? On what ground, then, dare you
 “ speak lightly of the law, or move that in a cri-
 “ minal trial, judges should advance one step be-
 “ yond what it permits them to go? The wisdom
 “ of our ancestors has found, that, as senators and
 “ magistrates enjoy higher dignities, and greater
 “ advantages than other members of the state,
 “ the law should also, with regard to them, be
 “ more strict, and the purity and uncorruptedness
 “ of their morals be guarded by more severe
 “ sanctions. But if it be your pleasure that this
 “ institution should be altered, if you wish to have
 “ the Cornelian law concerning bribery extend-
 “ ed to all ranks, then let us join, not in violating

* “ Ait Attius, indignum esse facinus, si senator judicio
 “ quemquam circumvenerit, eum legibus teneri; si Eques Ro-
 “ manus hoc idem fecerit, eum non teneri. Ut tibi concedam
 “ hoc indignum esse, tu mihi concedas necesse est multo esse in-
 “ dignius, in eâ civitate quae legibus contineatur, discedi a legi-
 “ bus. Hoc nam vinculum est hujus dignitatis qua fruimur in
 “ republicâ. Hoc fundamentum libertatis; hic sons equitatis;
 “ mens et animus, et consilium, et sententia civitatis posita est
 “ in legibus. Ut corpora nostra sine mente, sic civitatis sine
 “ lege, suis partibus, ut nervis ac sanguine et membris, ut non
 “ potest. Legum ministri, magistratus; legum interpretes,
 “ judices, legum denique idcicro omnes simus servi, ut liber
 “ esse possimus. Quid est, Q. Naso, cur tu in hoc loco sedeas?”
 &c.

“ the law, but in proposing to have this alteration
“ made by a new law. My client, Cluentius,
“ will be the foremost in this measure, who now,
“ while the old law subsists, rejected its defence,
“ and required his cause to be pleaded, as if he
“ had been bound by it. But, though he would
“ not avail himself of the law, you are bound
“ in justice not to stretch it beyond its proper
“ limits.”

Such is the reasoning of Cicero on this head : eloquent, surely, and strong. As his manner is diffuse, I have greatly abridged it from the original, but have endeavoured to retain its force.

In the latter part of the oration, Cicero treats of the other accusation that was brought against Cluentius, of having poisoned Oppianicus. On this, it appears, his accusers themselves laid small stress ; having placed their chief hope in overwhelming Cluentius with the odium of bribery in the former trial ; and therefore, on this part of the cause, Cicero does not dwell long. He shows the improbability of the whole tale which they related concerning this pretended poisoning, and makes it appear to be altogether destitute of any shadow of proof.

Nothing, therefore, remains but the peroration, or conclusion of the whole. In this, as indeed throughout the whole of this oration, Cicero is

uncommonly chaste, and, in the midst of much warmth and earnestness, keeps clear of turgid declamation. The peroration turns on two points; the indignation which the character and conduct of Sappho ought to excite, and the compassion due to a son, persecuted through his whole life by such a mother. He recapitulates the crimes of Sappho; her lewdness, her violation of every decorum, her incestuous marriages, her violence and cruelty; he places, in the most odious light, the eagerness and fury which she had shown in the suit she was carrying on against her son; describes her journey from Larinum to Rome, with a train of attendants, and a great store of money, that she might employ every method for circumventing and oppressing him in this trial; while, in the whole course of her journey, she was so detested, as to make a solitude wherever she lodged; she was shunned and avoided by all; her company, and her very looks, were reckoned contagious; the house was deemed polluted, which was entered into by so abandoned a woman *. To this he opposes the character of

* “ Cum appropinquare hujus judicium ei nuntiatum est,
“ confestim hic advolavit; ne aut accusatoribus diligentia, aut
“ pecunia testibus deessit; aut ne forte mater hoc sibi optatissi-
“ mum spectaculum hujus sordium atque luctus, et tanti squaloris
“ amitteret. Jam vero quod iter Romam hujus mulieris fuisse
“ existimatis? Quod ego propter vicinitatem Aquinatum et
“ Venafranorum ex multis comperi: quos concursus in his op-
“ pidis? Quantos et virorum et mulierum gemitus esse factos?
“ Mulierem quandum Larino, atque illam usque a mari supero

Cluentius, fair, unspotted, and respectable. He produces the testimonies of the magistrates of Larinum in his favour, given in the most ample and honourable manner by a public decree, and supported by a great concourse of the most noted inhabitants, who were now present, to second every thing that Cicero could say in favour of Cluentius.

“ Wherefore, judges,” he concludes, “ if you
“ abominate crimes, stop the triumph of this im-
“ pious woman, prevent this most unnatural mo-
“ ther from rejoicing in her son’s blood. If you
“ love virtue and worth, relieve this unfortunate
“ man, who, for so many years, has been exposed
“ to most unjust reproach through the calumnies
“ raised against him by Sassia, Oppianicus, and
“ all their adherents. Better far had it been for
“ him to have ended his days at once by the poi-
“ son which Oppianicus had prepared for him,
“ than to have escaped those snares, if he must
“ still be oppressed by an odium which I have
“ shown to be so unjust. But in you he trusts, in
“ your clemency, and your equity, that now, on

“ Romam proficisci cum magno comitatu et pecunia, quo faci-
“ lius circumvenire judicio capitii, atque opprimere filium possit.
“ Nemo erat illorum, poene dicam, quin expiandum illum locum
“ esse arbitraretur quacunque illa iter fecisset; nemo, quin ter-
“ ram ipsam violari, quae mater est omnium, vestigiis consele-
“ ratae matris putaret. Itaque nullo in oppido consistendi ei po-
“ testas fuit: nemo ex tct hospitibus inventus est qui non conta-
“ gionem aspectū fugeret.”

“ a full and fair hearing of his cause, you will restore him to his honour ; you will restore him to his friends and fellow-citizens, of whose zeal and high estimation of him you have seen such strong proofs ; and will show, by your decision, that though faction and calumny may reign for a while in popular meetings and harangues, in trial and judgment regard is paid to the truth only.”

I have given only a skeleton of this oration of Cicero. What I have principally aimed at, was to show his disposition and method ; his arrangement of facts, and the conduct and force of some of his main arguments. But, in order to have a full view of the subject, and of the art with which the orator manages it, recourse must be had to the original. Few of Cicero's orations contain a greater variety of facts and argumentations, which renders it difficult to analyse it fully. But for this reason I chose it, as an excellent example of managing at the bar a complex and intricate cause, with order, elegance, and force.

LECTURE XXIX.

ELOQUENCE OF THE PULPIT.

BEFORE treating of the structure and component parts of a regular oration, I purposed making some observations on the peculiar strain, the distinguishing characters, of each of the three great kinds of public speaking. I have already treated of the eloquence of popular assemblies, and of the eloquence of the bar. The subject which remains for this Lecture is, the strain and spirit of that eloquence which is suited to the pulpit.

Let us begin with considering the advantages and disadvantages, which belong to this field of public speaking. The pulpit has plainly several advantages peculiar to itself. The dignity and importance of its subjects must be acknowledged superior to any other. They are such as ought to interest every one, and can be brought home to every man's heart; and such as admit, at the same time, both the highest embellishment in describing, and the greatest vehemence and warmth in

enforcing them. The preacher has also great advantages in treating his subjects. He speaks not to one or a few judges, but to a large assembly. He is secure from all interruption. He is obliged to no replies, or extemporaneous efforts. He chuses his theme at leisure, and comes to the public with all the assistance which the most accurate premeditation can give him.

But, together with these advantages, there are also peculiar difficulties that attend the eloquence of the pulpit. The preacher, it is true, has no trouble in contending with an adversary ; but then, debate and contention enliven genius, and procure attention. The pulpit orator is, perhaps, in too quiet possession of his field. His subjects of discourse are, in themselves, noble and important, but they are subjects trite and familiar. They have for ages employed so many speakers, and so many pens ; the public ear is so much accustomed to them, that it requires more than an ordinary power of genius to fix attention. Nothing within the reach of art is more difficult, than to bestow on what is common, the grace of novelty. No sort of composition whatever is such a trial of skill, as where the merit of it lies wholly in the execution ; not in giving any information that is new, not in convincing men of what they did not believe ; but in dressing truths which they knew, and of which they were before convinced, in such colours as may most forcibly affect their imagina-

tion and heart *. It is to be considered too, that the subject of the preacher generally confines him to abstract qualities, to virtues and vices ; whereas, that of other popular speakers leads them to treat of persons, which is a subject that commonly interests the hearers more, and takes faster hold of the imagination. The preacher's business is solely to make you detest the crime. The pleader's, to make you detest the criminal. He describes a living person ; and with more facility rouses your in-

* What I have said on this subject, coincides very much with the observations made by the famous M. Bruyere, in his *Mœurs de Siecle*, when he is comparing the eloquence of the pulpit to that of the bar. " L'Eloquence de la chaire, en ce qui y entre d'humain, et du talent de l'orateur, est cachée, connue de peu de personnes, et d'une difficile execution. Il faut marcher par des chemins battus, dire ce qui a été dit, et ce qui l'ou prevoit que vous allez dire : les matières sont grandes, mais usées et tries ; les principes surs, mais dont les auditeurs penetrent les conclusions d'une seule vûe : il y entre des sujets qui sont sublimes, mais qui peut traiter le sublime ?—Le Prédicateur n'est point soutenu comme l'avocat par des faits toujours nouveaux par de differens événemens, par des avantures inouies ; il ne s'exerce point sur les questions douteuses ; il ne fait point valoir les violentes conjectures, et les presomptions ; toutes choses, néanmoins, qui élèvent le génie, lui donnent de la force, et de l'étendue, et qui contraignent bien moins l'éloquence, qu'elles ne le fixent, et le dirigent. Il doit, au contraire, tirer son discours d'une source commune, et au tout le monde puise ; et s'il s'écarte de ces lieux communs, il n'est plus populaire ; il est austre ou déclamateur."—The inference which he draws from these reflections is very just—" Il est plus aisé de prêcher que de plaider ; mais plus difficile de bien prêcher que de bien plaire." Le Characteres, ou Mœurs de ce Siecle, p. 601.

dignation. From these causes it comes to pass, that though we have a great number of moderately good preachers, we have, however, so few that are singularly eminent. We are still far from perfection in the art of preaching ; and perhaps there are few things in which it is more difficult to excel *. The object, however, is noble, and worthy, upon many accounts, of being pursued with zeal.

It may perhaps occur to some, that preaching is no proper subject of the art of eloquence. This, it may be said, belongs only to human studies and inventions ; but the truths of religion, with the greater simplicity, and the less mixture of art they are set forth, are likely to prove the more success-

* What I say here, and in other passages, of our being far from perfection in the art of preaching, and of there being few who are singularly eminent in it, is to be always understood as referring to an ideal view of the perfection of this art, which none, perhaps, since the days of the Apostles, ever did, or ever will reach. But in that degree of the eloquence of the pulpit, which promotes, in a considerable measure, the great end of edification, and gives a just title to high reputation and esteem, there are many who hold a very honourable rank. I agree entirely in opinion with a candid judge (Dr Campbell on Rhetoric, b. i. ch. 10.) who observes, that, considering how rare the talent of eloquence is among men, and considering all the disadvantages under which preachers labour, particularly from the frequency of this exercise joined with the other duties of their office, to which fixed pastors are obliged, there is more reason to wonder that we hear so many instructive, and even eloquent sermons, than that we hear so few.

ful. This objection would have weight, if eloquence were, as the persons who make such an objection commonly take it to be, an ostentatious and deceitful art, the study of words and of plausibility only, calculated to please, and to tickle the ear. But against this idea of eloquence I have all along guarded. True eloquence is the art of placing truth in the most advantageous light for conviction and persuasion. This is what every good man who preaches the Gospel not only may, but ought to have at heart. It is most intimately connected with the success of his ministry; and were it needful, as assuredly it is not, to reason any further on this head, we might refer to the discourses of the Prophets and Apostles, as models of the most sublime and persuasive eloquence, adapted both to the imagination and the passions of men.

An essential requisite, in order to preach well, is to have a just, and, at the same time, a fixed and habitual view of the end of preaching. For in no art can any man execute well, who has not a just idea of the end and object of that art. The end of all preaching is, to persuade men to become good. Every sermon, therefore, should be a persuasive oration. Not but that the preacher is to instruct and to teach, to reason and argue. All persuasion, as I showed formerly, is to be founded on conviction. The understanding must always be applied to in the first place, in order to

make a lasting impression on the heart ; and he who would work on men's passions, or influence their practice, without first giving them just principles, and enlightening their minds, is no better than a mere disclaimer. He may raise transient emotions, or kindle a passing ardour ; but can produce no solid or lasting effect. At the same time, it must be remembered, that all the preacher's instructions are to be of the practical kind ; and that persuasion must ever be his ultimate object. It is not to discuss some abstruse point, that he ascends the pulpit. It is not to illustrate some metaphysical truth, or to inform men of something which they never heard before ; but it is to make them better men ; it is to give them, at once, clear views, and persuasive impressions of religious truth. The eloquence of the pulpit, then, must be popular eloquence. One of the first qualities of preaching is to be popular ; not in the sense of accommodation to the humours and prejudices of the people (which tends only to make a preacher contemptible), but, in the true sense of the word, calculated to make impression on the people ; to strike and to seize their hearts. I scruple not therefore to assert, that the abstract and philosophical manner of preaching, however it may have sometimes been admired, is formed upon a very faulty idea, and deviates widely from the just plan of pulpit eloquence. Rational, indeed, a preacher ought always to be : he must give his audience clear ideas on every subject, and entertain them

with sense, not with sound ; but to be an accurate reasoner will be small praise, if he be not a persuasive speaker also.

Now, if this be the proper idea of a sermon, a persuasive oration, one very material consequence follows, that the preacher himself, in order to be successful, must be a good man. In a preceding Lecture, I endeavoured to show, that on no subject can any man be truly eloquent, who does not utter the “*veræ voces ab imo pectore*,” who does not speak the language of his own conviction, and his own feelings. If this holds, as, in my opinion, it does in other kinds of public speaking, it certainly holds in the highest degree in preaching. There, it is of the utmost consequence that the speaker firmly believe both the truth and the importance of those principles which he inculcates upon others ; and, not only that he believe them speculatively, but have a lively and serious feeling of them. This will always give an earnestness and strength, a fervour of piety to his exhortations, superior in its effects to all the arts of studied eloquence : and without it, the assistance of art will seldom be able to conceal the mere disclaimer. A spirit of true piety would prove the most effectual guard against those errors which preachers are apt to commit. It would make their discourses solid, cogent, and useful : it would prevent those frivolous and ostentatious harangues, which have no other aim than merely to make a parade of speech, or amuse an

audience; and perhaps the difficulty of attaining that pitch of habitual piety and goodness, which the perfection of pulpit eloquence would require, and of uniting it with that thorough knowledge of the world, and those other talents which are requisite for excelling in the pulpit, as one of the great causes why so few arrive at very high eminence in this sphere.

The chief characteristics of the eloquence suited to the pulpit, as distinguished from the other kinds of public speaking, appear to me to be these two, gravity and warmth. The serious nature of the subjects belonging to the pulpit, requires gravity; their importance to mankind, requires warmth. It is far from being either easy or common to unite these characters of eloquence. The grave, when it is predominant, is apt to run into a dull uniform solemnity. The warm, when it wants gravity, borders on the theatrical and light. The union of the two must be studied by all preachers as of the utmost consequence, both in the composition of their discourses, and in their manner of delivery. Gravity and warmth united, from that character of preaching which the French call *Onction*; the affecting, penetrating, interesting manner, flowing from a strong sensibility of heart in the preacher to the importance of those truths which he delivers, and an earnest desire that they may make full impression on the hearts of his hearers.

Next to a just idea of the nature and object of pulpit eloquence, the point of greatest importance to a preacher, is a proper choice of the subjects on which he preaches. To give rules for the choice of subjects for sermons, belongs to the theological more than to the rhetorical chair; only in general, there should be such as appear to the preacher to be the most useful, and the best accommodated to the circumstances of his audience. No man can be called eloquent, who speaks to an assembly on subjects, or in a strain which none or few of them comprehend. The unmeaning applause which the ignorant give to what is above their capacity, common sense and common probity must teach every man to despise. Usefulness and true eloquence always go together; and no man can long be reputed a good preacher who is not acknowledged to be an useful one.

The rules which relate to the conduct of the different parts of a sermon, the introduction, division, argumentative and pathetic parts, I reserve till I come to treat of the conduct of a discourse in general; but some rules and observations, which respect a sermon as a particular species of composition, I shall now give, and I hope they may be of some use.

The first which I shall mention is, to attend to the unity of a sermon. Unity indeed is of great consequence in every composition; but in other

discourses, where the choice and direction of the subject are not left to the speaker, it may be less in his power to preserve it. In a sermon, it must be always the preacher's own fault if he transgress it. What I mean by unity is, that there should be some one main point to which the whole strain of the sermon should refer. It must not be a bundle of different subjects strung together, but one object must predominate throughout. This rule is founded on what we call experience, that the mind can fully attend only to one capital object at a time. By dividing, you always weaken the impression. Now this unity, without which no sermon can either have much beauty, or much force, does not require that there should be no divisions or separate heads in the discourse, or that one single thought only should be, again and again turned up to the hearers in different lights. It is not to be understood in so narrow a sense : it admits of some variety ; it admits of under parts and appendages, provided always that so much union and connection be observed, as to make the whole concur in some one impression upon the mind. I may employ, for instance, several different arguments to enforce the love of God ; I may also inquire, perhaps, into the causes of the decay of this virtue ; still one great object is presented to the mind ; but if, because my text says, " He that loveth God, must love his brother also," I should, therefore, mingle in one discourse arguments for the love of God and for the love of our neighbour,

I should offend unpardonably against unity, and leave a very loose and confused impression on the hearers' minds.

In the second place, sermons are always the more striking, and commonly the more useful, the more precise and particular the subject of them is. This follows, in a great measure, from what I was just now illustrating. Though a general subject is capable of being conducted with a considerable degree of unity, yet that unity can never be so complete as in a particular one. The impression made must always be more undeterminate; and the instruction conveyed, will, commonly too, be less direct and convincing. General subjects, indeed, such as the excellency of the pleasures of religion, are often chosen by young preachers, as the most showy, and the easiest to be handled; and, doubtless, general views of religion are not to be neglected, as on several occasions they have great propriety. But these are not the subjects most favourable for producing the high effects of preaching. They fall in almost unavoidably with the beaten track of common-place thought. Attention is much more commanded by seizing some particular view of a great subject, some single interesting topic, and directing to that point the whole force of argument and eloquence. To recommend some one grace or virtue, or to inveigh against a particular vice, furnishes a subject not deficient in unity or precision; but if we con-

fine ourselves to that virtue or vice as assuming a particular aspect, and consider it as it appears in certain characters, or affects certain situations in life, the subject becomes still more interesting. The execution is, I admit, more difficult, but the merit and the effect are higher.

In the third place, never study to say all that can be said upon the subject ; no error is greater than this. Select the most useful, the most striking and persuasive topics which the text suggests, and rest the discourse upon these. If the doctrines which ministers of the Gospel preach were altogether new to their hearers, it might be requisite for them to be exceedingly full on every particular, lest there should be any hazard of their not affording complete information. But it is much less for the sake of information than of persuasion, that discourses are delivered from the pulpit : and nothing is more opposite to persuasion, than an unnecessary and tedious fulness. There are always some things which the preacher may suppose to be known, and some things which he may only slightly touch. If he seek to omit nothing which his subject suggests, it will unavoidably happen that he will encumber it, and weaken its force.

In studying a sermon, he ought to place himself in the situation of a serious hearer. Let him suppose the subject addressed to himself : let him consider what views of it would strike him most ;

what arguments would be most likely to persuade him ; what parts of it would dwell most upon his mind. Let these be employed as his principal materials ; and in these it is most likely his genius will exert itself with the greatest vigour. The spinning and wire-drawing mode, which is not uncommon among preachers, enervates the noblest truths. It may indeed be a consequence of observing the rule which I am now giving, that fewer sermons will be preached upon one text than is sometimes done ; but this will, in my opinion, be attended with no disadvantage. I know no benefit that arises from introducing a whole system of religious truth under every text. The simplest and most natural method by far, is to chuse that view of a subject to which the text principally leads, and to dwell no longer on the text than is sufficient for discussing the subject in that view, which can commonly be done with sufficient profoundness and distinctness, in one or a few discourses : for it is a very false notion to imagine, that they always preach the most profoundly, or go the deepest into a subject, who dwell on it the longest. On the contrary, that tedious circuit, which some are ready to take in all their illustrations, is very frequently owing, either to their want of discernment for perceiving what is most important in the subject ; or to their want of ability for placing it in the most proper point of view.

In the fourth place, study above all things to

render your instructions interesting to the hearers. This is the great trial and mark of true genius for the eloquence of the pulpit : for nothing is so fatal to success in preaching, as a dry manner. A dry sermon can never be a good one. In order to preach in an interesting manner, much will depend upon the delivery of a discourse ; for the manner in which a man speaks, is of the utmost consequence for affecting his audience ; but much will also depend on the composition of the discourse. Correct language, and elegant description, are but the secondary instruments of preaching in an interesting manner. The great secret lies, in bringing home all that is spoken to the hearts of the hearers, so as to make every man think that the preacher is addressing him in particular. For this end, let him avoid all intricate reasonings ; avoid expressing himself in general speculative propositions, or laying down practical truths in an abstract metaphysical manner. As much as possible, the discourse ought to be carried on in the strain of direct address to the audience ; not in the strain of one writing an essay, but of one speaking to a multitude, and studying to mix what is called application, or what has an immediate reference to practice, with the doctrinal and didactic parts of the sermon.

It will be of much advantage to keep always in view the different ages, characters, and conditions of men, and to accommodate directions and ex-

hortations to these different classes of hearers. Whenever you bring forth what a man feels to touch his own character, or to suit his own circumstances, you are sure of interesting him. No study is more necessary for this purpose, than the study of human life, and the human heart. To be able to unfold the heart, and to discover a man to himself, in a light in which he never saw his own character before, produces a wonderful effect. As long as the preacher hovers in a cloud of general observations, and descends not to trace the particular lines and features of manners, the audience are apt to think themselves unconcerned in the description. It is the striking accuracy of moral characters, that gives the chief power and effect to a preacher's discourse. Hence, examples founded on historical facts, and drawn from real life, of which kind the scriptures afford many, always when they are well chosen, command high attention. No favourable opportunity of introducing these should be omitted. They correct, in some degree, that disadvantage to which I before observed preaching is subject, of being confined to treat of qualities in the abstract, not of persons, and place the weight and reality of religious truths in the most convincing light. Perhaps the most beautiful, and among the most useful sermons of any, though, indeed, the most difficult in composition, are such as are wholly characteristical, or founded on the illustration of some peculiar character, or remarkable piece of history, in the sacred writings; by pursuing which, one can trace

and lay open, some of the most secret windings of man's heart. Other topics of preaching have been much beaten ; but this is a field, which, wide in itself, has hitherto been little explored by the composers of sermons, and possesses all the advantages of being curious, new, and highly useful. Bishop Butler's sermon on the *character of Balaam*, will give an idea of that sort of preaching which I have in my eye.

In the fifth and last place, Let me add a caution against taking the model of preaching from particular fashions that chance to have the vogue. These are torrents that swell to-day, and will have spent themselves by to-morrow. Sometimes it is the taste of poetical preaching, sometimes of philosophical, that has the fashion on its side ; at one time it must be all pathetic, at another time all argumentative, according as some celebrated preacher has set the example. Each of these modes in the extreme, is very faulty ; and he who conforms himself to any of them, will both cramp genius, and corrupt it. It is the universal taste of mankind, which is subject to no such changing modes, that alone is entitled to possess any authority ; and this will never give its sanction to any strain of preaching, but what is founded on human nature, connected with usefulness, adapted to the proper idea of a sermon, as a serious persuasive oration, delivered to a multitude, in order to make them better men. Let a preacher form himself upon this standard, and keep it close in his eye, and he

will be in a much surer road to reputation, and success at last, than by a servile compliance with any popular taste, or transient humour of his hearers. Truth and good sense are firm, and will establish themselves ; mode and humour are feeble and fluctuating. Let him never follow, implicitly, any one example ; or become a servile imitator of any preacher, however much admired. From various examples, he may pick up much for his improvement ; some he may prefer to the rest ; but the servility of imitation extinguishes all genius, or rather is a proof of the entire want of genius.

With respect to style, that which the pulpit requires, must certainly, in the first place, be very perspicuous. As discourses spoken there, are calculated for the instruction of all sorts of hearers, plainness and simplicity should reign in them. All unusual, swoln, or high-standing words, should be avoided; especially all words that are merely poetical, or merely philosophical. Young preachers are apt to be caught with the glare of these ; and in young composers the error may be excusable ; but they may be assured that it is an error, and proceeds from their not having yet acquired a correct taste. Dignity of expression, indeed, the pulpit requires in a high degree ; nothing that is mean or grovelling, no low or vulgar phrases, ought on any account to be admitted, But this dignity is perfectly consistent with simplicity. The words employed may be all plain words, easily understood, and in common use ; and yet the style may

be abundantly dignified, and, at the same time, very lively and animated. For a lively and animated style is extremely suited to the pulpit. The earnestness which a preacher ought to feel, and the grandeur and importance of his subjects, justify and often require warm and glowing expressions. He not only may employ metaphors and comparisons, but on proper occasions, may apostrophise the saint or the sinner; may personify inanimate objects, break out into bold exclamations, and, in general, has the command of the most passionate figures of speech. But on this subject, of the proper use and management of figures, I have insisted so fully in former Lectures, that I have no occasion now to give particular directions; unless it be only to recal to mind that most capital rule, never to employ strong figures, or a pathetic style, except in cases where the subject leads to them, and where the speaker is impelled to the use of them by native unaffected warmth.

The language of Sacred Scripture, properly employed, is a great ornament to sermons. It may be employed, either in the way of quotation, or allusion. Direct quotations, brought from Scripture, in order to support what the preacher inculcates, both give authority to his doctrine, and render his discourse more solemn and venerable. Allusions to remarkable passages, or expressions of Scripture, when introduced with propriety, have generally a pleasing effect. They afford the preacher a fund of metaphorical expression which

no other composition enjoys, and by means of which he can vary and enliven his style. But he must take care that all such allusions be natural and easy ; for if they seem forced, they approach to the nature of conceits *.

In a sermon, no points or conceits should appear, no affected smartness and quaintness of expression. These derogate much from the dignity of the pulpit ; and give to a preacher that air of foppishness, which he ought, above all things, to

* Bishop Sherlock, when showing that the views of reason have been enlarged, and the principles of natural religion illustrated, by the discoveries of Christianity, attacks unbelievers for the abuse they make of these advantages, in the following manner : “ What a return do we make for those blessings we “ have received ? How disrespectfully do we treat the Gospel “ of Christ, to which we owe that clear light both of reason and “ nature, which we now enjoy, when we endeavour to set up “ reason and nature in opposition to it ? Ought the *withered hand*, “ which Christ has restored and made whole, to be lifted up “ against him ? ” Vol. i. Disc. i. This allusion to a noted miracle of our Lord’s appears to me happy and elegant. Dr Seed is remarkably fond of allusions to Scripture style ; but he sometimes employs such as are too fanciful and strained. As when he says (Serm. iv.) “ No one great virtue will come single ; the virtues “ *that be her fellows will bear her company with joy and gladness ;* ” alluding to a passage in the XLVth Psalm, which relates to the virgins, the companions of the king’s daughter. And (Serm. xiii.) having said, that the universities have justly been called the eyes of the nation, he adds, “ *and if the eyes of the nation be evil, the the whole body of it must be full of darkness.* ”

shun. It is rather a strong expressive style, than a sparkling one, that is to be studied. But we must beware of imagining that we render style strong or expressive, by a constant and multiplied use of epithets. This is a great error. Epithets have often great beauty and force. But if we introduce them into every sentence, and string many of them together to one object, in place of strengthening, we clog and enfeeble style; in place of illustrating the image, we render it confused and indistinct. He that tells me “of this perishing, “mutable, and transitory world;” by all these three epithets, does not give me so strong an idea of what he would convey, as if he had used one of them with propriety. I conclude this head with an advice, never to have what may be called a favourite expression; for it shows affectation, and becomes disgusting. Let not any expression, which is remarkable for its lustre or beauty, occur twice in the same discourse. The repetition of it betrays a fondness to shine, and, at the same time, carries the appearance of a barren invention.

As to the question, whether it be most proper to write sermons fully, and commit them accurately to memory, or to study only the matter and thoughts, and trust the expression, in part at least, to the delivery? I am of opinion, that no universal rule can here be given. The choice of either of these methods must be left to preachers, according to their different genius. The expressions which

come warm and glowing from the mind, during the fervour of pronunciation, will often have a superior grace and energy, to those which are studied in the retirement of the closet. But then, this fluency and power of expression cannot, at all times, be depended upon, even by those of the readiest genius; and by many can at no time be commanded, when overawed by the presence of an audience. It is proper, therefore, to begin, at least, the practice of preaching, with writing as accurately as possible. This is absolutely necessary in the beginning, in order to acquire the power and habit of correct speaking, nay, also of correct thinking, upon religious subjects. I am inclined to go further, and to say, that it is proper not only to begin thus, but also to continue, as long as the habits of industry last, in the practice both of writing and committing to memory. Relaxation in this particular is so common, and so ready to grow upon most speakers in the pulpit, that there is little occasion for giving any cautions against the extreme of overdoing in accuracy.

Of pronunciation or delivery, I am hereafter to treat apart. All that I shall now say upon this head is, that the practice of reading sermons, is one of the greatest obstacles to the eloquence of the pulpit in Great Britain, where alone this practice prevails. No discourse, which is designed to be persuasive, can have the same force when read, as when spoken. The common people all feel

this, and their prejudice against this practice is not without foundation in nature. What is gained hereby in point of correctness, is not equal, I apprehend, to what is lost in point of persuasion and force. They, whose memories are not able to retain the whole of a discourse, might aid themselves considerably by short notes lying before them, which would allow them to preserve, in a great measure, the freedom and ease of one who speaks.

The French and English writers of sermons proceed upon very different ideas of the eloquence of the pulpit; and seem indeed to have split it betwixt them. A French sermon is, for most part, a warm animated exhortation; an English one is a piece of cool instructive reasoning. The French preachers address themselves chiefly to the imagination and the passions; the English almost solely to the understanding. It is the union of these two kinds of composition, of the French earnestness and warmth, with the English accuracy and reason, that would form, according to my idea, the model of a perfect sermon. A French sermon would sound in our ears as a florid, and often as an enthusiastic harangue. The censure which, in fact, the French critics pass on the English preachers is, that they are philosophers and logicians, but not orators *. The defects of most of the French

* " Les Sermons sont suivant notre methode, de vrais discours
" oratoires ; et non pas, comme chez les Anglois, des discussions

sermons are these: from a mode that prevails among them of taking their text from the lesson of the day, the connexion of the text with the subject is often unnatural and forced *; their applications of Scripture are fanciful rather than instructive; their method is stiff and cramped, by their practice of dividing their subject always either into three, or two, main points; and their composition is in general too diffuse, and consists rather of a very few thoughts spread out, and highly wrought up, than of a rich variety of sentiments. Admitting, however, all these defects, it cannot be denied, that their sermons are formed upon the idea of a persuasive popular oration; and therefore I am of opinion, they may be read with benefit.

Among the French Protestant divines, Saurin is the most distinguished: He is copious, eloquent, and devout, though too ostentatious in his manner.

“metaphysiques plus convenables à une Academie, qu’aux As-
“semblies populaires qui se forment dans nos temples, et qu’il
“s’agit d’instruire des devoirs du Chrétianisme, d’encourager, de
“consoler, d’édifier.”

Rhetorique Francoise, par M. Crevier, tom. i. p. 134.

* One of Massillon’s best sermons, that on the coldness and languor with which Christians perform the duties of religion, is preached from Luke iv. 18. *And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon’s house; and Simon’s wife’s mother was taken ill with a great fever.*

Among the Roman Catholics, the two most eminent are, Bourdaloue and Massillon. It is a subject of dispute among the French critics, to which of these the preference is due, and each of them has his partizans. To Bourdaloue, they attribute more solidity and close reasoning ; to Massillon, a more pleasing and engaging manner. Bourdaloue is indeed a great reasoner, and inculcates his doctrines with much zeal, piety, and earnestness ; but his style is verbose, he is disagreeably full of quotations from the fathers, and he wants imagination. Massillon has more grace, more sentiment, and, in my opinion, every way more genius. He discovers much knowledge both of the world and of the human heart ; he is pathetic and persuasive ; and, upon the whole, is perhaps the most eloquent writer of sermons which modern times have produced *.

* In order to give an idea of that kind of eloquence which is employed by the French preachers, I shall insert a passage from Massillon, which, in the Encyclopedie, (Article, Eloquence,) is extolled by Voltaire, who was the author of that article, as a chef d'œuvre, equal to any thing of which either ancient or modern times can boast. The subject of the sermon is, the small number of those who shall be saved. The strain of the whole discourse is extremely serious and animated ; but when the orator came to the passage which follows, Voltaire informs us, that the whole assembly were moved ; that by a sort of involuntary motion, they started up from their seats, and that such murmurs of surprise and acclamations arose as disconcerted the speaker, though they increased the effect of his discourse.

During the period that preceded the Restoration of King Charles II. the sermons of the Eng-

“ Je m’arrête à vous, mes frères, qui êtes ici assemblés. Je
“ ne parle plus du reste des hommes ; je vous regarde comme
“ si vous étiez seuls sur la terre : voici la pensée qui m’occupe
“ et qui m’épouante. Je suppose que c’est ici votre dernière
“ heure, et la fin de l’univers ; que les cieux vont s’ouvrir sur
“ vos têtes, Jesus Christ paroître dans sa gloire au milieu de ce
“ temple, et que vous n’y êtes assemblés que pour l’attendre,
“ comme des criminels tremblans, à qui l’on va prononcer, ou
“ un sentence de grace, ou un arrêt du mort éternelle. Car
“ vous avez beau vous flater ; vous mouriez tels que vous êtes
“ aujourd’hui. Tous ces désirs de changement que vous amusez,
“ vous amuseront jusqu’au lit de la mort : c’est l’expérience
“ de tous les siècles. Tout ce que vous trouverez alors en
“ vous de nouveau, sera peut-être un compte plus grand que
“ celui que vous auriez aujourd’hui à rendre ; et sur ce que
“ vous seriez, si l’on venoit vous juger dans ce moment, vous
“ pouvez presque décider ce que vous arriverez au sortir de la vie.
“ Or, je vous le demande, et je vous le demande frappé de
“ terreur, ne séparant pas en ce point mon sort du vôtre, et me
“ mettant dans la même disposition où je souhaite que vous entrez :
“ je vous demande, donc, si Jesus Christ paroîssoit dans ce
“ temple, au milieu de cette assemblée ; la plus auguste de l’univer-
“ vers, pour nous juger, pour faire le terrible discernement des
“ boues et des brebis, croyez vous que le plus grand nombre de
“ tout ce que nous sommes ici, fut placé à la droite ? Croyez vous
“ que les choses du moins fussent égales ? croyez vous qu’il s’y
“ trouvât seulement dix justes, que le Seigneur ne peut trouver
“ autrefois en cinq villes toutes entières ? Je vous le demande ;
“ vous l’ignorez, et je l’ignore moi-même. Vous seul, O mon
“ Dieu ! connoissez que vous appartenez.—Mes frères, notre
“ perte est presque assurée, et nous n’y pensons pas. Quand
“ même dans cette terrible séparation qui se fera un jour, il ne
“ devroit y avoir qu’un seul pêcheur de cet assemblée du côté

lish divines abounded with scholastic casuistical theology. They were full of minute divisions and subdivisions, and scraps of learning in the didactic part ; but to these were joined very warm pathetic addresses to the consciences of the hearers, in the

" des réprouvés, et qu'une voix du ciel viendroit nous en assurer
 " dans ce temple, sans le designer ; qui de nous ne craindroit
 " d'être de malheureux ? qui de nous ne retomberoit d'abord, sur
 " la conscience, pour examiner si ses crimes n'ont pas méritez
 " ce châtiment ? qui de nous, sasie de frayeur, ne demanderoit
 " pas à Jesus Christ comme autrefois les apôtres ; Seigneur, ne
 " seroit-ce pas moi ? Sommes nous sages, mes chers auditeurs ?
 " peut-être que parmi tous ceux qui m'entendent, il ne se trouvera
 " pas dix justes ; peut-être s'en trouvera-t-il encore moins. Que
 " sai je, O mon Dieu ! je n'ose ragarder d'un œil fixe les abîmes
 " de vos jugemens, et de votre justice ; peut-être ne s'en trouvera-
 " t-il qu'un seul ; et ce danger ne vous touche point, mon cher
 " auditeurs ? et vous croyez être ce seul heureux dans la grand
 " nombre qui perira ? vous qui avez moins sujet de le croire que
 " tout autre ; vous sur qui seul la sentence de mort devroit tomber.
 " Grand Dieu ! qui l'on connoit peu dans la monde les terreurs de
 " votre loi," &c.—After this awakening and alarming exhortation, the orator comes with propriety to this practical improvement : " Mais que conclure des ces grands verites ? qu'il faut de-
 " sesperer de son salut ? a Dieu ne plaise ; il n'y a que l'impie,
 " qui pour se calmer sur ses disordres, tache ici de conclure en
 " secret que tous les hommes periront comme lui ; ce ne doit pas
 " être là le fruits de ce discours. Mais de vous detromper de
 " cette erreur si universelle, qu'on peut faire ce que tous les autres
 " font : et que l'usage est une voie sûre ; mais de vous convain-
 " cre que pour se sauver, il faut de distinguer des autres ; être
 " singulier, vivre à part au milieu du monde, et ne pas resem-
 " bler à la foule."

applicatory part of the sermon. Upon the Restoration, preaching assumed a more correct and polished form. It became disincumbered from the pedantry and scholastic divisions of the sectaries ; but it threw out also their warm and pathetic addresses, and established itself wholly upon the model of cool reasoning, and rational instruction. As the dissenters from the church continued to preserve somewhat of the old strain of preaching, this led the established clergy to depart the farther from it. Whatever was earnest and passionate, either in the composition or delivery of sermons, was reckoned enthusiastic and fanatical ; and hence that argumentative manner, bordering on the dry and unpersuasive, which is too generally the character of English sermons. Nothing can be more correct upon that model than many of them are ; but the model itself on which they are formed, is a confined and imperfect one. Dr Clark, for instance, everywhere abounds in good sense, and the most clear and accurate reasoning ; his applications of Scripture are pertinent ; his style is always perspicuous, and often elegant ; he instructs and he convinces ; in what then is he deficient ? In nothing, except in the power of interesting and seizing the heart. He shews you what you ought to do ; but he excites not the desire of doing it ; he treats man as if he were a being of pure intellect, without imagination or passions. Archbishop Tillotson's manner is more free and warm, and he approaches

nearer than most of the English divines to the character of popular speaking. Hence he is, to this day, one of the best models we have for preaching. We must not indeed consider him in the light of a perfect orator; his composition is too loose and remiss; his style too feeble, and frequently too flat, to deserve that high character; but there is in some of his sermons so much warmth and earnestness, and through them all, there runs so much ease and perspicuity, such a vein of good sense and sincere piety, as justly entitle him to be held as eminent a preacher as England has produced.

In Dr Barrow, one admires more the prodigious fecundity of his invention, and the uncommon strength and force of his conceptions, than the felicity of his execution, or his talent in composition. We see a genius far surpassing the common, peculiar indeed almost to himself; but that genius often shooting wild, and unchastised by any discipline or study of eloquence.

I cannot attempt to give particular characters of that great number of writers of sermons which this and the former age has produced, among whom we meet with a variety of the most respectable names. We find in their composition much that deserves praise; a great display of abilities of different kinds, much good sense and piety, strong reasoning, sound divinity, and useful instruction; though, in general, the degree of eloquence bears

not, perhaps, equal proportion to the goodness of the matter. Bishop Atterbury deserves to be particularly mentioned as a model of correct and beautiful style, besides having the merit of a warmer and more eloquent strain of writing, in some of his sermons, than is commonly met with. Had Bishop Butler, in place of abstract philosophical essays, given us more sermons in the strain of those two excellent ones which he has composed upon self-deceit, and upon the character of Baláam, we should then have pointed him out as distinguished for that species of characteristical sermons which I before recommended.

Though the writings of the English divines are very proper to be read by such as are designed for the church, I must caution them against making too much use of them, or transcribing large passages from them into the sermons they compose. Such as once indulge themselves in this practice, will never have any fund of their own. Infinitely better it is, to venture into the pulpit with thoughts and expressions which have occurred to themselves, though of inferior beauty, than to disfigure their compositions by borrowed and ill-sorted ornaments, which, to a judicious eye, will be always in hazard of discovering their own poverty. When a preacher sits down to write on any subject, never let him begin with seeking to consult all who have written on the same text or subject. This, if he consult many, will throw perplexity and confu-

sion into his ideas ; and, if he consults only one, will often warp him insensibly into his method, whether it be right or not. But let him begin with pondering the subject in his own thoughts ; let him endeavour to fetch materials from within ; to collect and arrange his ideas ; and form some sort of plan to himself ; which it is always proper to put down in writing. Then, and not till then, he may inquire how others have treated the same subject. By this means, the method, and the leading thoughts in the sermon, are likely to be his own. These thoughts he may improve by comparing them with the track of sentiments which others have pursued ; some of their sense he may, without blame, incorporate into his composition ; retaining always his own words and style. This is fair assistance : all beyond is plagiarism.

On the whole, never let the capital principle, with which we set out at first, be forgotten, to keep close in view the great end for which a preacher mounts the pulpit ; even to infuse good dispositions into his hearers, to persuade them to serve God, and to become better men. Let this always dwell on his mind when he is composing, and it will diffuse through his compositions that spirit which will render them at once esteemed and useful. The most useful preacher is always the best, and will not fail of being esteemed so. Embellish truth only with a view to gain it the more full and free admission into your hearers'

minds ; and your ornaments will, in that case, be simple , masculine, natural. The best applause, by far, which a preacher can receive, arises from the serious and deep impressions which his discourse leaves on those who hear it. The finest encomium, perhaps, ever bestowed on a preacher, was given by Louis XIV. to the eloquent Bishop of Clermont, Father Massillon, whom I before mentioned with so much praise. After hearing him preach at Versailles, he said to him, “ Father, “ I have heard many great orators in this chapel ; “ I have been highly pleased with them ; but for “ you, whenever I hear you, I go away displeased “ with myself; for I see more of my own cha-“ racter.”

LECTURE XXX.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF A SERMON OF BISHOP ATTERBURY'S.

THE last Lecture was employed in observations on the peculiar and distinguishing characters of the eloquence proper for the pulpit. But as rules and directions, when delivered in the abstract, are never so useful as when they are illustrated by particular instances, it may, perhaps, be of some benefit to those who are designed for the church, that I should analyse an English sermon, and consider the matter of it, together with the manner. For this purpose I have chosen Bishop Atterbury as my example, who is deservedly accounted one of our most eloquent writers of sermons, and whom I mentioned as such in the last Lecture. At the same time, he is more distinguished for elegance and purity of expression, than for profoundness of thought. His style, though sometimes careless, is, upon the whole, neat and chaste; and more beautiful than that of most writers of sermons. In his sentiments he is not only rational,

but pious and devotional, which is a great excellency. The sermon which I have singled out, is that upon praise and thanksgiving, the first sermon of the first volume, which is reckoned one of his best. In examining it, it is necessary that I should use full liberty, and, together with the beauties, point out any defects that occur to me in the matter, as well as in the style.

PSALM I. 14. *Offer unto God thanksgiving.*

“ Among the many excellencies of this pious collection of hymns, for which so particular a value hath been set upon it by the church of God in all ages, this is not the least, that the true price of duties is there justly stated ; men are called off from resting in the outward show of religion, in ceremonies and ritual observances ; and taught, rather to practise (that which was shadowed out by these rites, and to which they are designed to lead) sound inward piety and virtue.

“ The several composers of these hymns were Prophets ; persons, whose business it was not only to foretel events for the benefit of the church in succeeding times, but to correct and reform also what was amiss among that race of men with whom they lived and conversed ; to preserve a foolish people from idolatry and false worship ; to rescue the law from corrupt glosses, and superstitious abuses ; and to put men in

“ mind of (what they are so willing to forget) that
“ eternal and invariable rule, which was before
“ these *positive* duties, would continue after them,
“ and was to be observed, even then, in preference
“ to them.

“ The discharge, I say, of this part of the pro-
“ phetic office taking up so much room in the
“ book of *Psalms*; this hath been one reason,
“ among many others, why they have always been
“ so highly esteemed; because we are from hence
“ furnished with a proper reply to an argument
“ commonly made use of by unbelievers, who look
“ upon all revealed religions as pious frauds and
“ impostures, on the account of the prejudices they
“ have entertained in relation to that of the *Jews*;
“ the whole of which they first suppose to lie in
“ external performances, and then easily persuade
“ themselves, that God could never be the author
“ of such a mere piece of pageantry and empty
“ formality; nor delight in a worship which con-
“ sisted purely in a number of odd unaccountable
“ ceremonies. Which objection of theirs, we
“ should not be able thoroughly to answer, unless
“ we could prove (chiefly out of the *Psalms*, and
“ other parts of the prophetic writings) that the
“ Jewish religion was somewhat more than bare
“ outside show; and that inward purity, and the
“ devotion of the heart, was a duty then, as well
“ as now.”

This appears to me an excellent introduction.

The thought on which it rests is solid and judicious; that in the book of Psalms, the attention of men is called to the moral and spiritual part of religion; and the Jewish dispensation thereby vindicated from the suspicion of requiring nothing more from its votaries, than the observance of the external rites and ceremonies of the law. Such views of religion are proper to be often displayed; and deserve to be insisted on, by all who wish to render preaching conducive to the great purpose of promoting righteousness and virtue. The style, as far as we have gone, is not only free from faults, but elegant and happy.

It is a great beauty in an introduction, when it can be made to turn on some one thought, fully brought out and illustrated; especially, if that thought has a close connection with the following discourse, and, at the same time, does not anticipate any thing that is afterwards to be introduced in a more proper place. This introduction of Atterbury's has all these advantages. The encomium which he makes on the strain of David's Psalms is not such as might as well have been prefixed to any other discourse, the text of which was taken from any of the Psalms. Had this been the case, the introduction would have lost much of its beauty. We shall see from what follows how naturally the introductory thought connects with his text, and how happily it ushers it in.

“ One great instance of this proof, we have in

“ the words now before us : which are taken from
“ a Psalm of *Asaph*, written on purpose to set out
“ the weakness and worthlessness of external per-
“ formances, when compared with more substan-
“ tial and vital duties. To enforce which doc-
“ trine, God himself is brought in as delivering it.
“ *Hear, O my people, and I will speak ; O Israel,*
“ *and I will testify against thee : I am God, even thy*
“ *God.* The preface is very solemn, and therefore
“ what it ushers in, we may be sure is of no com-
“ mon importance ; *I will not reprove thee for thy*
“ *sacrifices or thy burnt-offerings, to have been con-*
“ *tinually before me.* That is, I will not so reprove
“ thee for any failures in thy sacrifices and burnt-
“ offerings, as if these were the only, or the chief
“ things I required of thee. *I will take no bullock*
“ *out of thy house, nor he-goat out of thy folds ; I*
“ prescribed not sacrifices to thee for my own
“ sake, because I needed them ; *For every beast*
“ *of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand*
“ *hills.* Mine they are, and were, before I com-
“ manded thee to offer them to me ; so that, as it
“ follows, *If I were hungry, yet would I not tell*
“ *thee ; for the world is mine, and the fulness there-*
“ *of.* But can ye be so gross and senseless, as to
“ think me liable to hunger and thirst ? as to ima-
“ gine that wants of that kind can touch me ?
“ *Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of*
“ *goats ?—Thus doth he expostulate severely with*
“ *them, after the most graceful manner of the*
“ *Eastern poetry. The issue of which is a plain*
“ *and full resolution of the case, in those few*

“ words of the text—*Offer unto God thanksgiving.*
“ Would you do your homage the most agreeable
“ way ? would you render the most acceptable of
“ services ? *offer unto God thanksgiving.*”

It is often a difficult matter to illustrate gracefully the text of a sermon from the context, and to point out the connection between them. This is a part of the discourse which is apt to become dry and tedious, especially when pursued into a minute commentary. And therefore, except as far as such illustration from the context is necessary for explaining the meaning, or in cases where it serves to give dignity and force to the text, I would advise that it be always treated with brevity. Sometimes it may even be wholly omitted, and the text assumed merely as an independent proposition, if the connection with the context be obscure, and would require a laborious explanation. In the present case, the illustration from the context is singularly happy. The passage of the Psalm on which it is founded is noble and spirited, and connected in such a manner with the text, as to introduce it with a very striking emphasis. On the language I have little to observe, except that the phrase, *one great instance of this proof*, is a clumsy expression. It was sufficient to have said, *one great proof*, or *one great instance of this*. In the same sentence, when he speaks of *setting out the weakness and worthlessness of external performances*; we may observe, that the word *worthlessness*, as it is

now commonly used, signifies more than the deficiency of worth, which is all that the author means. It generally imports, a considerable degree of badness or blame. It would be more proper, therefore, to say, the *imperfection*, or the *insignificancy*, of external performances.

“ The use I intend to make of these words, is
“ from hence to raise some thoughts about that
“ very excellent and important duty of praise and
“ thanksgiving, a subject not unfit to be discoursed
“ of at this time; whether we consider, either
“ the more than ordinary coldness that appears of
“ late in men’s tempers towards the practice of
“ this (or any other) part of a warm and affect-
“ ing devotion; the great occasion of setting aside
“ this particular day in the calendar, some years
“ ago; or the new instances of mercy and good-
“ ness, which God hath lately been pleased to
“ bestow upon us; answering at last the many
“ *prayers and fastings*, by which we have besought
“ him so long for the establishment of their Ma-
“ jesties’ throne, and for the success of their arms;
“ and giving us, in his good time, an opportunity
“ of appearing before him in the more delightful
“ part of our duty, *with the voice of joy and praise,*
“ *with a multitude that keep holy-days.*”

In this paragraph there is nothing remarkable : no particular beauty or neatness of expression ; and the sentence which it forms is long and tiresome.

—*To raise some thoughts about that very excellent, &c.* is rather loose and awkward;—better—to recommend that very excellent, &c.; and when he mentions *setting aside* a particular day in the calendar, one would imagine, that *setting apart* would have been more proper, as to *set aside*, seems rather to suggest a different idea.

“ *Offer unto God thanksgiving.*—Which that we may do, let us inquire first, how we are to understand this command of offering praise and thanksgiving unto God; and then how reasonable it is that we should comply with it.”

This is the general division of the discourse. An excellent one it is, and corresponds to many subjects of this kind, where particular duties are to be treated of; first to explain, and then to recommend or enforce them. A division should always be simple and natural; and much depends on the proper view which it gives of the subject.

“ Our inquiry into what is meant here, will be very short; for who is there, that understands any thing of religion, but knows, that the offering praise and thanks to God, implies our having a lively and devout sense of his excellencies, and of his benefits; our recollecting them with humility and thankfulness of heart; and our expressing these inward affections by suitable outward signs, by reverent and lowly postures of

“ body, by songs and hymns, and spiritual ejaculations; either publicly or privately; either in “ the customary and daily service of the church, “ or in its more solemn assemblies, convened upon “ extraordinary occasions? This is the account “ which every Christian easily gives himself of it; “ and which, therefore, it would be needless to en- “ large upon. I shall only take notice upon this “ head, that praise and thanksgiving do, in strict- “ ness of speech, signify things somewhat different. “ Our *praise* properly terminates in God, on ac- “ count of his natural excellencies and perfec- “ tions; and is that act of devotion by which we “ confess and admire his several attributes: but “ *thanksgiving* is a narrower duty, and imports “ only a grateful sense and acknowledgment of “ past mercies. We praise God for all his glori- “ ous acts of every kind, that regard either us or “ other men; for his very *vengeance*, and those “ *judgments* which he sometimes sends *abroad in the earth*; but we thank him, properly speaking, “ for the instances of his *goodness* alone; and for “ such only of these as we ourselves are some way “ concerned in. This, I say, is what the two “ words strictly imply; but since the language of “ Scripture, is generally less exact, and useth “ either of them often to express the other by, I “ shall not think myself obliged, in what follows, “ thus nicely always to distinguish them.”

There was room here for insisting more fully on

the nature of the duty than the author has done under this head ; in particular, this was the place for correcting the mistake, to which men are always prone, of making thanksgiving to consist merely in outward expressions ; and for showing them, that the essence of the duty lies in the inward feelings of the heart. In general, it is of much use to give full and distinct explications of religious duties. But, as our author intended only one discourse on the subject, he could not enlarge with equal fulness on every part of it ; and he has chosen to dwell on that part on which indeed it is most necessary to enlarge, the motives enforcing the duty. For, as it is an easier matter to know, than to practise duty, the persuasive part of the discourse is that to which the speaker should always bend his chief strength. The account given in this head, of the nature of praise and thanksgiving, though short, is yet comprehensive and distinct, and the language is smooth and elegant.

“ Now the great *reasonableness* of this duty of
“ praise or thanksgiving, and our several *obliga-*
“ *tions* to it, will appear, if we either consider it
“ *absolutely* in itself, as the debt of our natures ;
“ or *compare* it with other duties, and show the
“ rank it bears among them ; or set out, in the
“ last place, some of its peculiar and proper
“ *advantages*, with regard to the devout performer
“ of it.”

The author here enters upon the main part of

his subject, the reasonableness of the duty, and mentions three arguments for proving it. These are well stated, and are in themselves proper and weighty considerations. How far he has handled each of them to advantage, will appear as we proceed. I cannot, however, but think that he has omitted one very material part of the argument, which was to have shown the obligations we are under to this duty, from the various subjects of thanksgiving afforded us by the Divine goodness. This would have led him to review the chief benefits of creation, providence, and redemption: and certainly, they are these which lay the foundation of the whole argument for thanksgiving. The heart must first be affected with a suitable sense of the Divine benefits, before one can be excited to praise God. If you would persuade me to be thankful to a benefactor, you must not employ such considerations merely as those upon which the author here rests, taken from gratitude's being the law of my nature, or bearing a high rank among moral duties, or being attended with peculiar advantages. These are considerations but of a secondary nature. You must begin with setting before me all that my friend has done for me, if you mean to touch my heart, and to call forth the emotions of gratitude. The case is perfectly similar, when we are exhorted to give thanks to God; and, therefore, in giving a full view of the subject, the blessings conferred on us by Divine goodness should have been taken into the argument.

It may be said, however, in apology for our author, that this would have led him into too wide a field for one discourse, and into a field also, which is difficult, because so beaten, the enumeration of the Divine benefits. He, therefore, seems to take it for granted, that we have upon our minds a just sense of these benefits. He assumes them as known and acknowledged; and setting aside what may be called the pathetic part of the subject, or what was calculated to warm the heart, he goes on to the reasoning part. In this management, I cannot altogether blame him. I do not by any means say, that it is necessary in every discourse to take in all that belongs to the doctrine of which we treat. Many a discourse is spoiled, by attempting to render it too copious and comprehensive. The preacher may, without reprehension, take up any part of a great subject to which his genius at the time leads him, and make that his theme. But when he omits any thing which may be thought essential, he ought to give notice, that this is a part, which for the time he lays aside. Something of this sort would perhaps have been proper here. Our author might have begun by saying, that the reasonableness of this duty must appear to every thinking being, who reflects upon the infinite obligations which are laid upon us, by creating, preserving, and redeeming love; and, after taking notice that the field which these open, was too wide for him to enter upon at that time, have proceeded to his other heads. Let us now consider these separately.

“ The duty of praise and thanksgiving, considered *absolutely* in itself, is, I say, the debt and law of our nature. We had such faculties bestowed on us by our Creator, as made us capable of satisfying this debt, and obeying this law ; and they never, therefore, work more naturally and freely, than when they are thus employed.

“ 'Tis one of the earliest instructions given us by philosophy, and which hath ever since been approved and inculcated by the wisest men of all ages, that the original design of making man was, that he might praise and honour him who made him. When God had finished this goodly frame of things we call *the world*, and put together the several parts of it, according to his infinite wisdom, in exact number, weight, and measure, there was still wanting a creature, in these lower regions, that could apprehend the beauty, order, and exquisite contrivance of it ; that from contemplating the gift, might be able to raise itself to the great Giver, and do honour to all his attributes. Every thing indeed that God made, did, in some sense, glorify its Author, inasmuch as it carried upon it the plain mark and impress of the Deity, and was an effect worthy of that first cause from whence it flowed ; and thus might the *Heavens* be said, at the first moment in which they stood forth, *to declare his glory, and the firmament to shew*

“ *his handy-work*: But this was an imperfect and
“ defective glory ; the sign was of no signification
“ here below, whilst there was no one here as yet
“ to take notice of it. Man, therefore, was form-
“ ed to supply this want, endowed with powers
“ fit to find out, and to acknowledge these unli-
“ mited perfections ; and then put into this tem-
“ ple of God, this lower world, as the priest of na-
“ ture, to offer up the incense of thanks and praise
“ for the mute and insensible part of the creation.

“ This, I say, hath been the opinion all along
“ of the most thoughtful men down from the
“ most ancient times : and though it be not de-
“ monstrative, yet it is what we cannot but judge
“ highly reasonable, if we do but allow, that man
“ was made for some end or other ; and that he is
“ capable of perceiving that end. For, then, let
“ us search and inquire never so much, we shall
“ find no other account of him that we can rest
“ upon so well. If we say, that he was made
“ purely for the good pleasure of God ; this is in
“ effect to say, that he was made for no determi-
“ nate end, or for none, at least, that we can dis-
“ cern. If we say, that he was designed as an in-
“ stance of the wisdom, and power, and goodness
“ of God ; this, indeed, may be the reason of his
“ *being* in general ; for 'tis the common reason of
“ the being of every thing besides. But it gives
“ no account, why he was made *such* a being as
“ he is, a reflecting, thoughtful, inquisitive being.
“ The particular reason of this seems most aptly

“ to be drawn from the praise and honour that
“ was (not only to redound to God from him, but)
“ to be given to God by him.”

The thought which runs through all this passage, of man's being the priest of nature, and of his existence being calculated chiefly for this end, that he might offer up the praises of the mute part of the creation, is an ingenious thought, and well illustrated. It was a favourite idea among some of the ancient philosophers, and it is not the worse on that account, as it thereby appears to have been a natural sentiment of the human mind. In composing a sermon, however, it might have been better to have introduced it as a sort of collateral argument, or an incidental illustration, than to have displayed it with so much pomp, and to have placed it in the front of the arguments for this duty. It does not seem to me, when placed in this station, to bear all the stress which the author lays upon it. When the Divine goodness brought man into existence, we cannot well conceive that its chief purpose was, to form a being who might sing praises to his Maker. Prompted by infinite benevolence, the Supreme Creator formed the human race, that they might rise to happiness, and to the enjoyment of himself, through a course of virtue or proper action. The sentiment on which our author dwells, however beautiful, appears too loose and rhetorical, to be a principal head of discourse.

“ This duty, therefore, is the debt and law of
“ our nature. And it will more distinctly appear
“ to be such, if we consider the two ruling facul-
“ ties of our mind, the *understanding* and the *will*
“ apart, in both which it is deeply founded : in
“ the understanding, as in the principle of reason
“ which owns and acknowledges it ; in the will, as
“ in the fountain of gratitude and return, which
“ prompts, and even constrains us to pay it.

“ *Reason* was given us as a rule and measure,
“ by the help of which we were to proportion our
“ esteem of every thing, according to the degrees
“ of perfection and goodness which we found
“ therein. It cannot, therefore, if it doth its of-
“ fice at all, but apprehend God as the best and
“ most perfect being ; it must needs see and own
“ and admire his infinite perfections. And this is
“ what is strictly meant by *praise* ; which, there-
“ fore, is expressed in Scripture, by *confessing* to
“ *God*, and *acknowledging* him ; by *ascribing* to
“ him what is his due ; and as far as this sense of
“ the word reaches, 'tis impossible to *think* of
“ *God* without praising him : for it depends not
“ on the understanding, how it shall apprehend
“ things, any more than it doth on the eye, how
“ visible objects shall appear to it.

“ The duty takes the further and surer hold of
“ us, by the means of the will, and that strong
“ bent towards gratitude, which the author of our
“ nature hath implanted in it. There is not a
“ more active principle than this in the mind of

" man ; and surely that which deserves its utmost
" force, and should set all its springs a-work, is God ;
" the great and universal Benefactor, from whom
" alone we received whatever we either have, or
" are, and to whom we can possibly repay no-
" thing but our praises, or (to speak more proper-
" ly on this head, and according to the strict im-
" port of the word) our thanksgiving. *Who hath*
" *first given to God* (said the great Apostle in his
" usual figure) *and it shall be recompensed unto him*
" *again?* A gift, it seems, always requires a recom-
" pense : nay, *but of him, and through him, and to*
" *him, are all things: of him*, as the Author; *through*
" *him*, as the Preserver and Governor ; *to him*, as
" the end and perfection of all things ; *to whom*
" *therefore*, (as it follows) *be glory for ever, Amen!*"

I cannot much approve of the light in which our author places his argument in these paragraphs. There is something too metaphysical and refined, in his deducing, in this manner, the obligation to thanksgiving, from the two faculties of the mind, understanding and will. Though what he says be in itself just, yet the argument is not sufficiently plain and striking. Arguments in sermons, especially on subjects that so naturally and easily suggest them, should be palpable and popular ; should not be brought from topics that appear far sought, but should directly address the heart and feelings. The preacher ought never to depart too far from the common ways of thinking,

and expressing himself. I am inclined to think, that this whole head might have been improved, if the author had taken up more obvious ground ; had stated gratitude as one in the most natural principles of the human heart ; had illustrated this, by shewing how odious the opposite disposition is, and with what general consent men, in all ages, have agreed in hating and condemning the ungrateful ; and then applying these reasonings to the present case, had placed in a strong view, that entire corruption of moral sentiment which it discovers, to be destitute of thankful emotions towards the supreme benefactor of mankind. As the most natural method of giving vent to grateful sentiments is, by external expressions of thanksgiving, he might then have answered the objection that is apt to occur, of the expression of our praise being insignificant to the Almighty. But, by seeking to be too refined in his argument, he has omitted some of the most striking and obvious considerations, and which, properly displayed, would have afforded as great a field for eloquence, as the topics which he has chosen. He goes on,

“ Gratitude consists in an equal return of benefits, if we are able ; of thanks, if we are not : “ which thanks, therefore, must rise always in “ proportion as the favours received are great, and “ the receiver incapable of making any other sort “ of requital. Now, since no man hath benefited “ God at any time, and yet every man, in each

“ moment of his life, is continually benefited by
“ him, what strong obligations must we needs be
“ under to thank him ? It is true, our thanks are
“ really as insignificant to him, as any other kind
“ of return would be ; in themselves, indeed, they
“ are worthless ; but his goodness hath put a value
“ upon them : he hath declared, he will accept
“ them in lieu of the vast debt we owe ; and after
“ that, which is fittest for us, to dispute how they
“ came to be taken as an *equivalent*, or to pay
“ them ?

“ It is, therefore, the voice of nature, (as far as
“ gratitude itself is so), that the good things we
“ receive from above should be sent back again
“ thither in thanks and praises ; *as the rivers run*
“ *into the sea, to the place* (the ocean of benefi-
“ cence) *from whence the rivers come, thither should*
“ *they return again.*”

In these paragraphs, he has, indeed, touched some of the considerations which I mentioned. But he has only touched them ; whereas, with advantage, they might have formed the main body of his argument.

“ We have considered the duty *absolutely* ; we
“ are now to *compare* it with others, and to see
“ what rank it bears among them. And here we
“ shall find, that, among all the acts of religion
“ immediately addressed to God, this is much the
“ noblest and most excellent ; as it must needs be,

" if what hath been laid down be allowed, that
" the end of man's creation was to praise and glo-
" rify God. For that cannot but be the most no-
" ble and excellent act of any being, which best
" answers the end and design of it. Other parts
" of devotion, such as *confession* and *prayer*, seem
" not originally to have been designed for man,
" nor man for them. They imply *guilt* and *want*,
" with which the *state of innocence* was not ac-
" quainted. Had man continued in that estate,
" his worship (like the devotions of angels) had
" been paid to Heaven in pure acts of thanksgiv-
" ing; and nothing had been left for him to do,
" beyond the enjoying the good things of life, as
" nature directed, and praising the God of nature
" who bestowed them. But being fallen from in-
" nocence and abundance; having contracted guilt;
" and forfeited his right to all sorts of mercies;
" prayer and confession became necessary, for a
" time, to retrieve the loss, and to restore him to
" that state wherein he should be able to live
" without them. These are fitted, therefore, for
" a lower dispensation; before which, in paradise,
" there was nothing but praise, and after which,
" there shall be nothing but that in heaven. Our
" perfect state did at first, and will at last, consist
" in the performance of this duty; and herein,
" therefore, lies the excellence, and the honour
" of our nature."

'Tis the same way of reasoning, by which the

“ Apostle hath given the preference to charity,
“ beyond faith, and hope, and every spiritual gift.
“ *Charity never faileth*, saith he ; meaning that it
“ is not a virtue useful only in this life ; but will
“ accompany us also into the next : *but whether*
“ *there be prophesies, they shall fail* ; *whether there be know-*
“ *ledge, it shall vanish away*. These are gifts of a
“ temporary advantage, and shall all perish in the
“ using. *For we know in part, and we prophesy in*
“ *part* ; our present state is imperfect, and, there-
“ fore, what belongs to that, and only that, must
“ be imperfect too. *But when that which is perfect*
“ *is come, then that which is in part shall be done*
“ *away*. The argument of St Paul, we see, which
“ sets charity above the rest of Christian graces,
“ will give praise also the pre-eminence over all
“ the parts of Christian worship ; and we may
“ conclude our reasoning, therefore, as he doth
“ his : *And now abideth confession, prayer, and*
“ *praise, these three ; but the greatest of these is*
“ *praise*. ”

The author, here, enters on the second part of his argument, the high rank which thanksgiving holds, when compared with other duties of religion. This he handles with much eloquence and beauty. His idea, that this was the original worship of man before his fall rendered other duties requisite, and shall continue to be his worship in heaven, when the duties which are occasioned by a con-

sciousness of guilt shall have no place, is solid and just; his illustration of it is very happy; and the style extremely flowing and sweet. Seldom do we meet with any piece of composition in sermons, that has more merit than this head.

“ It is so, certainly, on other accounts, as well
“ as this; particularly, as it is the most *disinterested*-
“ *ed* branch of our religious service; such as hath
“ the most of God, and the least of ourselves in
“ it, of any we pay; and therefore approaches
“ the nearest of any to a pure, and free, and per-
“ fect act of homage. For though a good action
“ doth not grow immediately worthless by being
“ done with the prospect of advantage, as some
“ have strangely imagined; yet it will be allowed,
“ I suppose, that its being done, without the mix-
“ ture of that end, or with as little of it as possi-
“ ble, recommends it so much the more, and
“ raises the price of it. *Doth Job fear God for*
“ *nought?* was an objection of Satan; which im-
“ plied that those duties were most valuable, where
“ our own interest was least aimed at: and God
“ seems, by the commission he then gave Satan,
“ to try experiments upon *Job*, thus far to have
“ allowed his plea. Now, our requests for future,
“ and even our acknowledgments of past mercies,
“ centre purely in ourselves; our own interest is
“ the direct aim of them. But praise is a gene-
“ rous and unmercenary principle, which purposes
“ no other end to itself, but to do, as is fit for a

“ creature endowed with such faculties to do towards the most perfect and beneficent of beings, “ and to pay the willing tribute of honour there, “ where the voice of reason directs us to pay it. “ God hath, indeed, annexed a blessing to the “ duty ; and when we know this, we cannot chuse, “ while we are performing the duty, but have some “ regard to the blessing which belongs to it. How- “ ever, that isnot the direct aim of our devotions, “ nor was it the first motive that stirred us up to “ them. Had it been so, we should naturally “ have betaken ourselves to prayer, and breathed “ out our desires in that form wherein they are “ most properly conveyed.

“ In short, praise is our most excellent work, “ a work common to the church triumphant and “ militant, and which lifts us up into communion “ and fellowship with angels. The matter about “ which it is conversant, is always the perfection “ of God’s nature ; and the act itself, is the per- “ fection of ours.”

Our author’s second illustration, is taken from praise being the most disinterested act of homage. This he explains justly and elegantly ; though, perhaps, the consideration is rather too thin and refined for enforcing religious duties : as creatures, such as we, in approaching to the Divine presence, can never be supposed to lay aside all consider- ation of our own wants and necessities ; and cer- tainly are not required (as the author admits) to

divest ourselves of such regards. The concluding sentence of this head is elegant and happily expressed.

“ I come now, in the last place, to set out some
“ of its peculiar *properties and advantages*, which
“ recommend it to the devout performer. And,
“ 1. It is the most *pleasing* part of our devo-
“ tions : it proceeds always from a lively cheerful
“ temper of mind, and it cherishes and improves
“ what it proceeds from. *For it is good to sing*
“ *praises unto our God* (says one whose experience,
“ in this case, we may rely upon), *for it is plea-*
“ *sant, and praise is comely.* Petition and confes-
“ sion are the language of the indigent and the
“ guilty, the breathings of a sad and contrite spirit ;
“ *Is any afflicted ? let him pray ; but, Is any merry ?*
“ *let him sing psalms.* The most usual and natural
“ way of men’s expressing the mirth of their
“ hearts is in a song, and songs are the very lan-
“ guage of praise, to the expressing of which
“ they are in a peculiar manner appropriated, and
“ are scarce of any other use in religion. Indeed,
“ the whole composition of this duty is such, as
“ throughout speaks ease and delight to the mind.
“ It proceeds from *love* and from *thankfulness* ;
“ from *love*, the fountain of pleasure, the passion
“ which gives every thing we do, or enjoy, its re-
“ lish or agreeableness. From *thankfulness*; which
“ involves in it the memory of past benefits, the
“ actual presence of them to the mind, and the

" repeated enjoyment of them. And as is its principle, such is its end also: for it procureth quiet and ease to the mind, by doing somewhat towards satisfying that debt which it labours under; by delivering it of those thoughts of praise and gratitude, those exultations it is so full of; and which would grow uneasy and troublesome to it, if they were kept in. If the thankful *refrained*, it would be pain and grief to them; but then, then is their soul satisfied as with marrow and fatness, when their mouth praiseth God with joyful lips."

In beginning this head of discourse, the expression which the author uses, to *set out some of its peculiar properties and advantages*, would now be reckoned not so proper an expression, as *to point out, or to show*. The first subdivision concerning praise being the most pleasant part of devotion, is very just and well expressed, as far as it goes; but seems to me rather defective. Much more might have been said, upon the pleasure that accompanies such exalted acts of devotion. It was a cold thought, to dwell upon its disburdening the mind of a debt. The author should have insisted more upon the influence of praise and thanksgiving, in warming, gladdening, soothing the mind; lifting it above the world, to dwell among divine and eternal objects. He should have described the peace and joy which then expand the heart; the relief which this exercise procures from the cares and

agitations of life ; the encouraging views of Providence to which it leads our attention ; and the trust which it promotes in the Divine mercy for the future, by the commemoration of benefits past. In short, this was the place for his pouring out a greater flow of devotional sentiments than what we here find.

“ 2. It is another distinguishing property of divine praise, that it enlargeth the powers and capacities of our souls, turning them from low and little things, upon their greatest and noblest object, the divine nature, and employing them in the discovery and admiration of those several perfections that adorn it. We see what difference there is between man and man, such as there is hardly greater between man and beast ; and this proceeds chiefly from the different sphere of thought which they act in, and the different objects they converse with. The mind is essentially the same in the peasant and the prince ; the force of it naturally equal, in the untaught man, and the philosopher ; only the one of these is busied in mean affairs, and within narrower bounds ; the other exercises himself in things of weight and moment ; and this it is, that puts the wide distance between them. Noble objects are to the mind, what the sun-beams are to a bud or flower ; they open and unfold, as it were, the leaves of it ; put it upon exerting and spreading itself every way ; and call forth

“ all those powers that lie hid and locked up in it.
“ The praise and admiration of God, therefore,
“ brings this advantage along with it, that it sets
“ our faculties upon their full stretch, and im-
“ proves them to all the degrees of perfection of
“ which they are capable.”

This head is just, well expressed, and to censure it might appear hypercritical. Some of the expressions, however, one would think, might be amended. The simile, for instance, about the effects of the sun-beams upon the bud or flower, is pretty, but not correctly expressed. *They open and unfold, as it were, the leaves of it.* If this is to be literally applied to the flower, the phrase *as it were*, is needless; if it is to be metaphorically understood, (which appears to be the case) the *leaves of the mind*, is harsh language; besides that, *put it upon exerting itself*, is rather a low expression. Nothing is more nice, than to manage properly such similes and allusions, so as to preserve them perfectly correct, and at the same time to render the image lively; it might perhaps be amended in some such way as this: “ As the sun-beams
“ open the bud, and unfold the leaves of a flower,
“ noble objects have a like effect upon the mind:
“ they expand and spread it, and call forth those
“ powers that before lay hid and locked up in the
“ soul.”

“ 3. It farther promotes in us an exquisite

“ sense of God’s honour, and an high indignation
“ of mind at every thing that openly profanes it.
“ For what we value and delight in, we cannot
“ with patience hear slighted or abused. Our own
“ praises, which we are constantly putting up,
“ will be a *spur* to us towards procuring and pro-
“ moting the Divine glory in every other instance ;
“ and will make us set our faces against all open
“ and avowed impieties ; which, methinks, should
“ be considered a little by such as would be
“ thought not to be wanting in this duty, and yet
“ are often silent under the foulest dishonours done
“ to religion, and its great Author : for tamely to
“ hear God’s name and worship vilified by others,
“ is no very good argument that we have been
“ used to honour and reverence him, in good ear-
“ nest, ourselves.”

The thought here is well founded, though it is carelessly and loosely brought out. The sentence, *our own praises which we are constantly putting up, will be a spur to us toward procuring and promoting the Divine glory in every other instance*, is both negligent in language, and ambiguous in meaning ; for *our own praises*, properly signifies the praises of ourselves. Much better if he had said, “ Those “ devout praises which we constantly offer up to “ the Almighty, will naturally prompt us to pro- “ mote the Divine glory in every other instance.”

“ 4. It will, beyond all this, work in us a deep

“ humility and consciousness of our own imperfections. Upon a frequent attention to God “ and his attributes, we shall easily discover our “ own weakness and emptiness ; our swelling “ thoughts of ourselves will abate, and we shall “ see and feel that we are *altogether lighter to be laid in the balance than vanity* ; and this is a lesson which to the greatest part of mankind, is, I “ think, very well worth learning. We are naturally presumptuous and vain ; full of ourselves, and regardless of every thing besides, especially when some little outward privileges distinguish us from the rest of mankind ; then, ‘tis odds, but we look into ourselves with great degrees of complacency, *and are wiser (and better every way) in our own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason.* Now, nothing will contribute so much to the cure of this vanity, as a due attention to God’s excellencies and perfections. By comparing these with those which we imagine belong to us, we shall learn, *not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think of ourselves, but to think soberly;* we shall find more satisfaction in looking upwards, and humbling ourselves before our common Creator, than in casting our eyes downward with scorn upon our fellow-creatures, and setting at nought any part of the work of his hands. The vast distance we are at from real and infinite worth, will astonish us so much, “ that we shall not be tempted to value ourselves

" upon these lesser degrees of pre-eminence,
" which custom or opinion, or some little acci-
" dental advantages, have given us over other
" men."

Though the thought here also be just, yet a like deficiency in elegance and beauty appears. The phrase, *'tis odds but we look into ourselves with great degrees of complacency*, is much too low and colloquial for a sermon—he might have said, *we are likely*, or *we are prone* to look into ourselves—*Comparing these with those which we imagine belong to us*, is also very careless style.—*By comparing these with the virtues and abilities which we ascribe to ourselves, we shall learn*—would have been purer and more correct.

" 5. I shall mention but one use of it more,
" and 'tis this ; that a conscientious praise of God
" will keep us back from all false and mean praise,
" all fulsome and servile flatteries, such as are in
" use among men. Praising, as 'tis commonly
" managed, is nothing else but a trial of skill upon
" a man, how many good things we can possibly
" say of him. All the treasures of oratory are
" ransacked, and all the fine things that ever were
" said, are heaped together for his sake ; and no
" matter whether it belongs to him or not ; so
" there be but enough on't. Which is one de-
" plorable instance, among a thousand, of the base-
" ness of human nature, of its small regard to truth

“ and justice ; to right or wrong ; to what is, or is
“ not to be praised. But he who hath a deep
“ sense of the excellencies of God upon his heart,
“ will make a god of nothing besides. He will
“ give every one his just encomium, honour where
“ honour is due, and as much as is due, because
“ it is his duty to do so ; but the honour of God
“ will suffer him to go no further. Which rule, if
“ it had been observed, a neighbouring prince
“ (who now, God be thanked, needs flattery a
“ great deal more than ever he did) would have
“ wanted a great deal of that incense which hath
“ been offered up to him by his adorers.”

This head appears scarcely to deserve any place among the more important topics that naturally presented themselves on this subject ; at least, it had much better have wanted the application which the author makes of his reasoning to the flatterers of Louis XIV. ; and the thanks which he offers to God, for the affairs of that prince being in so low a state, that he now needed flattery more than ever. This political satire is altogether out of place, and unworthy of the subject.

One would be inclined to think, upon reviewing our author's arguments, that he has overlooked some topics, respecting the happy consequences of this duty, of fully as much importance as any that he has inserted. Particularly, he ought not to have omitted the happy tendency of praise and thanks-

giving, to strengthen good dispositions in the heart ; to promote love to God, and imitation of those perfections which we adore ; and to infuse a spirit of ardour and zeal into the whole of religion, as the service of our benefactor. These are consequences which naturally follow from the proper performance of this duty ; and which ought not to have been omitted ; as no opportunity should be lost, of showing the good effect of devotion on practical religion and moral virtue ; and pointing out the necessary connection of the one with the other. For certainly the great end of preaching is, to make men better in all the relations of life, and to promote that complete reformation of heart and conduct, in which true Christianity consists. Our author, however, upon the whole, is not deficient in such views of religion ; for, in his general strain of preaching, as he is extremely pious, so he is, at the same time, practical and moral.

His summing up of the whole argument, in the next paragraph, is elegant and beautiful ; and such concluding views of the subject are frequently very proper and useful : “ Upon these grounds doth the “ duty of praise stand, and these are the obliga-“ tions that bind us to the performance of it. ’Tis “ the end of our being, and the very rule and law “ of our nature ; flowing from the two great foun-“ tains of human action, the understanding, and “ the will, naturally, and almost necessarily. It “ is the most excellent part of our religious wor-

“ ship ; enduring to eternity, after the rest shall be
“ *done away* ; and paid, even now in the frankest
“ manner, with the least regard to our own interest.
“ It recommends itself to us by several peculiar
“ properties and advantages ; as it carries more
“ pleasure in it, than all other kinds of devotion ;
“ as it enlarges and exalts the several powers of
“ the mind ; as it breeds in us an exquisite sense
“ of God’s honour, and a willingness to promote
“ it in the world ; as it teaches us to be humble
“ and lowly ourselves, and yet preserves us from
“ base and sordid flattery, from bestowing mean
“ and undue praises upon others.”

After this, our author addresses himself to two classes of men, the careless and the profane. His address to the careless is beautiful and pathetic ; that to the profane is not so well executed, and is liable to some objection. Such addresses appear to me to be, on several occasions, very useful parts of a discourse. They prevailed much in the strain of preaching before the Restoration ; and, perhaps, since that period, have been too much neglected. They afford an opportunity of bringing home to the consciences of the audience, many things, which, in the course of the sermon, were, perhaps, delivered in the abstract.

I shall not dwell on the conclusion of the sermon, which is chiefly employed in observations on the posture of public affairs at that time. Con-

sidered upon the whole, this discourse of Bishop Atterbury's is both useful and beautiful, though I have ventured to point out some defects in it. Seldom or never can we expect to meet with a composition of any kind, which is absolutely perfect in all its parts: and when we take into account the difficulties which I before shewed to attend the eloquence of the pulpit, we have, perhaps, less reason to look for perfection in a sermon, than in any other composition.

LECTURE XXXI.

CONDUCT OF A DISCOURSE IN ALL ITS PARTS—INTRODUCTION—DIVISION—NARRATION AND EXPLICATION.

I HAVE, in the four preceding Lectures, considered what is peculiar to each of the three great fields of public speaking, popular assemblies, the bar, and the pulpit. I am now to treat of what is common to them all, of the conduct of a discourse, or oration, in general. The previous view which I have given of the distinguishing spirit and character of different kinds of public speaking, was necessary for the proper application of the rules which I am about to deliver; and as I proceed, I shall farther point out, how far any of these rules may have a particular respect to the bar, to the pulpit, or to popular courts.

On whatever subject any one intends to discourse, he will most commonly begin with some introduction, in order to prepare the minds of his hearers; he will then state his subject, and explain the facts connected with it; he will employ argu-

ments for establishing his own opinion, and overthrowing that of his antagonist : he may, perhaps, if there be room for it, endeavour to touch the passions of his audience ; and after having said all he thinks proper, he will bring his discourse to a close, by some peroration or conclusion. This being the natural train of speaking, the parts that compose a regular formal oration, are these six ; first, the exordium or introduction ; secondly, the state, and the division of the subject ; thirdly, narration or explication ; fourthly, the reasoning or arguments ; fifthly, the pathetic part ; and lastly, the conclusion. I do not mean, that each of these must enter into every public discourse, or that they must enter always in this order. There is no reason for being so formal on every occasion ; nay, it would often be a fault, and would render a discourse pedantic and stiff. There may be many excellent discourses in public, where several of these parts are altogether wanting ; where the speaker, for instance, uses no introduction, but enters directly on his subject ; where he has no occasion either to divide or explain ; but simply reasons on one side of the question, and then finishes. But as the parts which I have mentioned, are the natural constituent parts of a regular oration ; and as in every discourse whatever, some of them must be found, it is necessary to our present purpose, that I should treat of each of them distinctly.

I begin, of course, with the exordium or introduction. This is manifestly common to all the

three kinds of public speaking. It is not a rhetorical invention. It is founded upon nature, and suggested by common sense. When one is going to counsel another; when he takes upon him to instruct, or to reprove, prudence will generally direct him not to do it abruptly, but to use some preparation; to begin with somewhat that may incline the persons to whom he addresses himself, to judge favourably of what he is about to say, and may dispose them to such a train of thought, as will forward and assist the purpose which he has in view. This is, or ought to be, the main scope of an introduction. Accordingly Cicero and Quinetilian mention three ends, to one or other of which it should be subservient, “ Reddere auditores benevolos, attentos, dociles.”

First, To conciliate the good-will of the hearers; to render them benevolent, or well-affected to the speaker and to the subject. Topics for this purpose may, in causes at the bar, be sometimes taken from the particular situation of the speaker himself, or of his client, or from the character or behaviour of his antagonists contrasted with his own; on other occasions, from the nature of the subject, as closely connected with the interest of the hearers; and, in general, from the modesty and good intention with which the speaker enters upon his subject. The second end of an introduction is, to raise the attention of the hearers; which may be effected by giving them some hints of the importance, dignity, or novelty of the sub-

ject; or some favourable view of the clearness and precision with which we are to treat it; and of the brevity with which we are to discourse. The third end is to render the hearers docile, or open to persuasion; for which end we must begin with studying to remove any particular prepossessions they may have contracted against the cause, or side of the argument which we espouse.

Some one of these ends should be proposed by every introduction. When there is no occasion for aiming at any of them; when we are already secure of the good-will, the attention, and the docility of the audience, as may often be the case, formal introductions may, without any prejudice, be omitted. And, indeed, when they serve for no purpose but mere ostentation, they had for the most part better be omitted; unless as far as respect to the audience makes it decent, that a speaker should not break in upon them too abruptly, but by a short exordium prepare them for what he is going to say. Demosthenes's introductions are always short and simple; Cicero's are fuller and more artful.

The ancient critics distinguished two kinds of introductions, which they call “*Principium*,” and “*Insinuatio*.” “*Principium*” is, where the orator plainly and directly professes his aim in speaking. “*Insinuatio*” is, where a larger compass must be taken; and where, presuming the disposition of the audience to be much against the ora-

tor, he must gradually reconcile them to hearing him, before he plainly discovers the point which he has in view.

Of this latter sort of introduction, we have an admirable instance in Cicero's second oration against Rullus. This Rullus was tribune of the people, and had proposed an agrarian law : the purpose of which was to create a decemvirate, or ten commissioners, with absolute power for five years over all the lands conquered by the republic, in order to divide them among the citizens. Such laws had often been proposed by factious magistrates, and were always greedily received by the people. Cicero is speaking to the people ; he had lately been made consul by their interest, and his first attempt is to make them reject this law. The subject was extremely delicate, and required much art. He begins with acknowledging all the favours which he had received from the people, in preference to the nobility. He professes himself the creature of their power, and of all men the most engaged to promote their interest. He declares, that he held himself to be the consul of the people ; and that he would always glory in preserving the character of a popular magistrate. But to be popular, he observes, is an ambiguous word. He understood it to import, a steady attachment to the real interest of the people, to their liberty, their ease, and their peace; but by some, he saw it was abused, and made a cover to their own selfish and ambitious designs. In this

manner, he begins to draw gradually nearer to his purpose of attacking the proposal of Rullus, but still with great management and reserve. He protests, that he is far from being an enemy to agrarian laws; he gives the highest praises to the Gracchi, those zealous patrons of the people; and assures them, that when he first heard of Rullus's law, he had resolved to support it, if he found it for their interest; but that, upon examining it, he found it calculated to establish a dominion that was inconsistent with liberty, and to aggrandize a few men at the expence of the public; and then terminates his exordium, with telling them, that he is going to give his reasons for being of this opinion: but that if his reasons shall not satisfy them, he will give up his own opinion, and embrace theirs. In all this, there was great art. His eloquence produced the intended effect; and the people, with one voice, rejected this agrarian law.

Having given these general views of the nature and end of an introduction, I proceed to lay down some rules for the proper composition of it. These are the more necessary, as this is a part of the discourse which requires no small care. It is always of importance to begin well; to make a favourable impression at first setting out; when the minds of the hearers, vacant as yet, and free, are most disposed to receive any impression easily. I must add too, that a good introduction is

often found to be extremely difficult. Few parts of the discourse give the composer more trouble, or are attended with more nicety in the execution.

The first rule is, That the introduction should be easy and natural. The subject must always suggest it. It must appear as Cicero beautifully expresses it, “Effloruisse penitus ex re de qua tum agitur*.” It is too common a fault in introductions, that they are taken from some commonplace topic, which has no peculiar relation to the subject in hand ; by which means they stand apart, like pieces detached from the rest of the discourse. Of this kind are Sallust’s introductions, prefixed to his Catilinarian and Jugurthine wars. They might as well have been introductions to any other history, or to any other treatise whatever ; and, therefore, though elegant in themselves, they must be considered as blemishes in the work, from want of due connection with it. Cicero, though abundantly correct in this particular in his orations, yet is not so in his other works. It appears from a letter of his to Atticus (L. xvi. 6.), that it was his custom to prepare, at his leisure, a collection of different introductions or prefaces, ready to be prefixed to any work that he might afterwards publish. In consequence of this strange method of composing, it happened to him, to em-

* “ To have sprung up, of its own accord, from the matter which is under consideration.”

ploy the same introduction twice without remembering it ; prefixing it to two different works. Upon Atticus informing him of this, he acknowledges the mistake, and sends him a new introduction.

In order to render introductions natural and easy, it is, in my opinion, a good rule, that they should not be planned, till after one has meditated in his own mind the substance of his discourse. Then, and not till then, he should begin to think of some proper and natural introduction. By taking a contrary course, and labouring in the first place on an introduction, every one who is accustomed to composition will often find, that either he is led to lay hold of some common-place topic, or that, instead of the introduction being accommodated to the discourse, he is obliged to accommodate the whole discourse to the introduction which he had previously written. Cicero makes this remark ; though, as we have seen, his practice was not always conformable to his own rule.
“ *Omnibus rebus consideratis, tum denique id
quod primum est dicendum, postremum soleo
cogitare, quo utar exordio. Nam si quando id
primum invenire volui, nullum mihi occurrit,
nisi aut exile, aut nugatorium, aut vulgare *.*”

* “ When I have planned and digested all the materials of my discourse, it is my custom to think, in the last place, of the introduction with which I am to begin. For if at any time I have endeavoured to invent an introduction at first, nothing has ever occurred to me for that purpose, but what was trifling, nugatory, and vulgar.”

After the mind has been once warmed and put in train, by close meditation on the subject, materials for the preface will then suggest themselves much more readily.

In the second place, in an introduction, correctness should be carefully studied in the expression. This is requisite, on account of the situation of the hearers. They are then more disposed to criticise than at any other period ; they are, as yet, unoccupied with the subject or the arguments ; their attention is wholly directed to the speaker's style and manner. Something must be done, therefore, to prepossess them in his favour ; though, for the same reasons, too much art must be avoided ; for it will be more easily detected at that time, than afterwards ; and will derogate from persuasion in all that follows. A correct plainness, and elegant simplicity, is the proper character of an introduction ; “ *ut videamur*,” says Quintilian, “ *accuratè non callidè dicere.*”

In the third place, modesty is another character which it must carry. All appearances of modesty are favourable and prepossessing. If the orator set out with an air of arrogance and ostentation, the self-love and pride of the hearers will be presently awakened, and will follow him with a very suspicious eye throughout all his progress. His modesty should discover itself not only in his expressions at the beginning, but in his whole man-

ner, in his looks, in his gestures, in the tone of his voice. Every auditor take in good part those marks of respect and awe, which are paid to them by one who addresses them. Indeed the modesty of an introduction should never betray any thing mean or abject. It is always of great use to an orator, that together with modesty and deference to his hearers, he should shew a certain sense of dignity, arising from a persuasion of the justice or importance of the subject on which he is to speak.

The modesty of an introduction requires, that it promise not too much. “*Non fumum ex fullore, sed ex fumo dare lucem **.” This certainly is the general rule, that an orator should not put forth all his strength at the beginning, but should rise and grow upon us, as his discourse advances. There are cases, however, in which it is allowable for him to set out from the first in a high and bold tone ; as, for instance, when he rises to defend some cause which has been much run down, and decried by the public. Too modest a beginning might be then like a confession of guilt. By the boldness and strength of his exordium, he must endeavour to stem the tide that is against him,

* He does not lavish at a blaze his fire,
Sudden to glare, and then in smoke expire ;
But rises from a cloud of smoke to light,
And pours his specious miracles to sight.

and to remove prejudices, by encountering them without fear. In subjects too of a declamatory nature, and in sermons, where the subject is striking, a magnificent introduction has sometimes a good effect, if it be properly supported in the sequel. Thus Bishop Atterbury, in beginning an eloquent sermon, preached on the 30th of January, the anniversary of what is called King Charles's Martyrdom, sets out in this pompous manner : “ This is “ a day of trouble, of rebuke, and of blasphemy ; “ distinguished in the calendar of our church, and “ the annals of our nation, by the sufferings of an “ excellent prince, who fell a sacrifice to the rage “ of his rebellious subjects ; and, by his fall, de-“ rived infamy, misery, and guilt on them, and “ their sinful posterity.” Bossuet, Flechier, and the other celebrated French preachers, very often begin their discourses with laboured and sublime introductions. These raise attention, and throw a lustre on the subject ; but let every speaker be much on his guard against striking a higher note at the beginning, than he is able to keep up in his progress.

In the fourth place, an introduction should usually be carried on in the calm manner. This is seldom the place for vehemence and passion. Emotion must rise as the discourse advances. The minds of the hearers must be gradually prepared, before the speaker can venture on strong and passionate sentiments. The exceptions to this

rule are, when the subject is such, that the very mention of it naturally awakens some passionate emotion; or when the unexpected presence of some person or object, in a popular assembly, inflames the speaker, and makes him break forth with unusual warmth. Either of these will justify what is called the exordium *ab abrupto*. Thus the appearance of Catiline in the senate renders the vehement beginning of Cicero's first oration against him very natural and proper : *Quousque tandem, "Catilina, abutere patientia nostra?"* And thus Bishop Atterbury, in preaching from this text, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in "me," ventures on breaking forth with this bold exordium: "And can any man then be offended "in thee, blessed Jesus?" which address to our Saviour he continues for a page or two, till he enters on the division of his subject. But such introductions as these should be hazarded by very few, as they promise so much vehemence and uncertainty through the rest of the discourse, that it is very difficult to fulfil the expectations of the hearers.

At the same time, though the introduction is not the place in which warm emotions are usually to be attempted, yet I must take notice, that it ought to prepare the way for such as are designed to be raised in subsequent parts of the discourse. The orator should, in the beginning, turn the minds of his hearers towards those sentiments and feel-

ings which he seeks to awaken in the course of his speech. According, for instance, as it is compassion, or indignation, or contempt, on which his discourse is to rest, he ought to sow the seeds of these in his introduction ; he ought to begin with breathing that spirit which he means to inspire. Much of the orator's art and ability is shown, in thus striking properly at the commencement, the key-note, if we may so express it, of the rest of his oration.

In the fifth place, It is a rule in introductions, not to anticipate any material part of the subject. When topics, or arguments, which are afterwards to be enlarged upon, are hinted at, and, in part, brought forth in the introduction, they lose the grace of novelty upon their second appearance. The impression intended to be made by any capital thought, is always made with the greatest advantage, when it is made entire, and in its proper place.

In the last place, the introduction ought to be proportioned, both in length, and in kind, to the discourse that is to follow : in length, as nothing can be more absurd than to erect a very great portico before a small building ; and in kind, as it is no less absurd to overcharge, with superb ornaments, the portico of a plain dwelling-house, or to make the entrance to a monument as gay as that

to an arbour. Common sense directs, that every part of a discourse should be suited to the strain and spirit of the whole.

These are the principal rules that relate to introductions. They are adapted, in a great measure, equally, to discourses of all kinds. In pleadings at the bar, or speeches in public assemblies, particular care must be taken not to employ any introduction of that kind, which the adverse party may lay hold of, and turn to his advantage. To this inconvenience all those introductions are exposed, which are taken from general and commonplace-topics ; and it never fails to give an adversary a considerable triumph, if, by giving a small turn to something we had said in our exordium, he can appear to convert to his own favour, the principles with which we had set out, in beginning our attack upon him. In the case of replies, Quincilian makes an observation which is very worthy of notice ; that introductions, drawn from something that has been said in the course of the debate, have always a peculiar grace ; and the reason he gives for it is just and sensible : “ *Multum gratiae exordio est, quod ab actione diversæ partis materialiam trahit; hoc ipso, quod non compositum domi, sed ibi atque e re natum; et facilitate famam ingenii auget; et facie simplicis, sumptuosa proximo sermonis, fidem quoque acquirit; adeo, ut etiamsi reliqua scripta atque elaborata sint, tamen videatur tota extemporalis.* ”

“ oratio, cuius initium nihil preparatum habuisse,
“ manifestum est *.”

In sermons, such a practice as this cannot take place ; and, indeed, in composing sermons, few things are more difficult than to remove an appearance of stiffness from an introduction, when a formal one is used. The French preachers, as I before observed, are often very splendid and lively in their introductions : but, among us, attempts of this kind are not always so successful. When long introductions are formed upon some common-place topic as the desire of happiness being natural to man, or the like, they never fail of being tedious. Variety should be studied in this part of composition as much as possible ; often it may be proper to begin without any introduction at all, unless, perhaps, one or two sentences. Explanatory introductions from the context, are the most simple of any, and frequently the best that can be used ; but as they are in hazard of becoming dry, they

* “ An introduction, which is founded upon the pleading of
“ the opposite party, is extremely graceful ; for this reason, that
“ it appears not to have been meditated at home, but to have taken
“ rise from the business, and to have been composed on the spot.
“ Hence, it gives to the speaker the reputation of a quick invention,
“ and adds weight likewise to his discourse, as artless and
“ unlaboured ; insomuch, that though all the rest of his oration
“ should be studied and written, yet the whole discourse has the
“ appearance of being extemporary, as it is evident that the introduction to it was unpremeditated.”

should never be long. A historical introduction has, generally, a happy effect to rouse attention; when one can lay hold upon some noted fact that is connected with the text or the discourse, and, by a proper illustration of it, open the way to the subject that is to be treated of.

After the introduction, what commonly comes next in order, is the proposition, or enunciation of the subject; concerning which there is nothing to be said, but that it should be as clear and distinct as possible, and expressed in few and plain words, without the least affectation. To this generally succeeds the division, or the laying down the method of the discourse; on which it is necessary to make some observations. I do not mean, that in every discourse, a formal division or distribution of it into parts, is requisite. There are many occasions of public speaking when this is neither requisite nor would be proper; when the discourse, perhaps, is to be short, or only one point is to be treated of; or when the speaker does not choose to warn his hearers of the method he is to follow, or of the conclusion to which he seeks to bring them. Order of one kind or other is, indeed, essential to every good discourse; that is, every thing should be so arranged, as that what goes before may give light and force to what follows. But this may be accomplished by means of a concealed method. What we call division is, when the method is propounded in form to the hearers.

The discourse in which this sort of division most commonly takes place, is a sermon ; and a question has been moved, whether this method of laying down heads, as it is called, be the best method of preaching. A very able judge, the archbishop of Cambray, in his Dialogues on Eloquence, declares strongly against it. He observes, that it is a modern invention ; that it was never practised by the Fathers of the Church ; and, what is certainly true, that it took its rise from the schoolmen, when metaphysics began to be introduced into preaching. He is of opinion, that it renders a sermon stiff : that it breaks the unity of the discourse ; and that, by the natural connection of one part with another, the attention of the hearers would be carried along the whole with more advantage.

But, notwithstanding his authority and his arguments, I cannot help being of opinion, that the present method of dividing a sermon into heads, ought not to be laid aside. Established practice has now given it so much weight, that, were there nothing more in its favour, it would be dangerous for any preacher to deviate so far from the common track. But the practice itself has also, in my judgment, much reason on its side. If formal partitions give a sermon less of the oratorial appearance, they render it, however, more clear, more easily apprehended, and, of course, more instructive to the bulk of hearers, which is always the

main object to be kept in view. The heads of a sermon are great assistances to the memory and recollection of a hearer. They serve also to fix his attention. They enable him more easily to keep pace with the progress of the discourse : they give him pauses and resting places, where he can reflect on what has been said, and look forward to what is to follow. They are attended with this advantage too, that they give the audience the opportunity of knowing, before-hand, when they are to be released from the fatigue of attention, and thereby make them follow the speaker more patiently ; “ *Reficit audientem,*” says Quintilian, taking notice of this very advantage of divisions in other discourses, “ *Reficit audientem cer-*”
“ *to singularum partium fine ; non aliter quām fa-*
“ *cientibus iter, multum detrahunt fatigationis no-*
“ *tata spatia inscriptis lapidibus : nam et exhausti*
“ *laboris nōsse mensuram voluptati est ; et horta-*
“ *tur ad reliqua fortius exequenda, scire quantum*
“ *supersit *.*” With regard to breaking the unity of a discourse, I cannot be of opinion that there arises, from that quarter, any argument against the method I am defending. If the unity be broken, it is to the nature of the heads, or topics of

* “ The conclusion of each head is a relief to the hearers ; just as, upon a journey, the mile-stones which are set upon the road, serve to diminish the traveller’s fatigue. For we are always pleased with seeing our labour begin to lessen ; and, by calculating how much remains, are stirred up to finish our task more cheerfully.”

which the speaker treats, that this is to be imputed ; not to his laying them down in form. On the contrary, if his heads be well chosen, his marking them out, and distinguishing them, in place of impairing the unity of the whole, renders it more conspicuous and complete ; by showing how all the parts of a discourse hang upon one another, and tend to one point.

In a sermon, or in a pleading, or any discourse, where division is proper to be used, the most material rules are,

First, That the several parts into which the subject is divided, be really distinct from one another ; that is, that no one include another. It were a very absurd division, for instance, if one should propose to treat first, of the advantages of virtue, and next, of those of justice or temperance ; because, the first head evidently comprehends the second, as a genus does the species ; which method of proceeding involves the subject in indistinctness and disorder.

Secondly, In division, we must take care to follow the order of nature ; beginning with the simplest points, such as are easiest apprehended, and necessary to be first discussed ; and proceeding thence to those which are built upon the former, and which suppose them to be known. We must divide the subject into those parts, into which

most easily and naturally it is resolved ; that it may seem to split itself, and not to be violently torn asunder : “ *Dividere*,” as is commonly said, “ *non frangere*.”

Thirdly, The several members of a division ought to exhaust the subject ; otherwise we do not make a complete division ; we exhibit the subject by pieces and corners only, without giving any such plan as displays the whole.

Fourthly, The terms in which our partitions are expressed, should be as concise as possible. Avoid all circumlocution here. Admit not a single word but what is necessary. Precision is to be studied, above all things, in laying down a method. It is this which chiefly makes a division appear neat and elegant ; when the several heads are propounded in the clearest, most expressive, and, at the same time, the fewest words possible. This never fails to strike the hearers agreeably ; and is, at the same time, of great consequence towards making the divisions be more easily remembered.

Fifthly, Avoid an unnecessary multiplication of heads. To split a subject into a great many minute parts, by divisions and subdivisions without end, has always a bad effect in speaking. It may be proper in a logical treatise ; but it makes an oration appear hard and dry, and unnecessarily

fatigues the memory. In a sermon, there may be from three to five or six heads, including subdivisions ; seldom should there be more.

In a sermon, or in a pleading at the bar, few things are of greater consequence, than a proper or happy division. It should be studied with much accuracy and care ; for if one take a wrong method at first setting out, it will lead them astray in all that follows. It will render the whole discourse either perplexed or languid ; and though the hearers may not be able to tell where the fault or disorder lies, they will be sensible there is a disorder somewhere, and find themselves little affected by what is spoken. The French writers of sermons study neatness and elegance in the division of their subjects much more than the English do ; whose distributions, though sensible and just, yet are often inartificial and verbose. Among the French, however, too much quaintness appears in their divisions, with an affectation of always setting out either with two, or with three, general heads of discourse. A division of Massillon's on this text, "It is finished," has been much extolled by the French critics : "This imports," says the preacher, "consummation, first of justice on the part of God; secondly, Of wickedness on the part of men; thirdly, Of love on the part of Christ." This also of Bourdaloue's has been much praised, from these words, "My peace I give unto you :" "Peace," says he, "first, To the understanding,

“ by submission to faith ; secondly, To the heart,
“ by submission to the law.

The next constituent part of a discourse, which I mentioned, was narration or explication. I put these two together, both because they fall nearly under the same rules, and because they commonly answer the same purpose ; serving to illustrate the cause, or the subject of which the orator treats, before he proceeds to argue either on one side or other ; or to make any attempt for interesting the passions of the hearers.

In pleadings at the bar, narration is often a very important part of the discourse, and requires to be particularly attended to. Besides its being in any case no easy matter to relate with grace and propriety, there is, in narrations at the bar, a peculiar difficulty. The pleader must say nothing but what is true ; and at the same time, he must avoid saying any thing that will hurt his cause. The facts which he relates, are to be the ground-work of all his future reasoning. To recount them so as to keep strictly within the bounds of truth, and yet to present them under the colours most favourable to his cause ; to place, in the most striking light, every circumstance which is to his advantage, and to soften and weaken such as make against him, demand no small exertion of skill and dexterity. He must always remember, that if he discovers too much art, he defeats his own purpose,

and creates a distrust of his sincerity. Quintilian very properly directs, “ Effugienda in hac præcī-
“ pùe parte, omnis calliditatis suspicio; neque
“ enim se usquam magis custodit judex, quàm
“ cùm narrat orator; nihil tum videatur fictum;
“ nihil sollicitum; omnia potius a causa, quam ab
“ oratore, profecta videantur *.”

To be clear and distinct, to be probable, and to be concise, are the qualities which critics chiefly require in narration; each of which carries, sufficiently, the evidence of its importance. Distinctness belongs to the whole train of the discourse, but is especially requisite in narration, which ought to throw light on all that follows. A fact, or a single circumstance left in obscurity, and misapprehended by the judge, may destroy the effect of all the argument and reasoning which the speaker employs. If his narration be improbable, the judge will not regard it; and if it be tedious and diffuse, he will be tired of it, and forget it. In order to produce distinctness, besides the study of the general rules of perspicuity which were formerly given, narration requires particular atten-

* “ In this part of discourse, the speaker must be very careful
“ to shun every appearance of art and cunning. For there is no
“ time at which the judge is more upon his guard, than when
“ the pleader is relating facts. Let nothing then seem feigned;
“ nothing anxiously concealed. Let all that is said appear to
“ arise from the cause itself, and not to be the work of the orator.”

tion to ascertain clearly the names, the dates, the places, and every other material circumstance of the facts recounted. In order to be probable in narration, it is material to enter into the characters of the persons of whom we speak, and to show, that their actions proceeded from such motives as are natural, and likely to gain belief. In order to be as concise as the subject will admit, it is necessary to throw out all superfluous circumstances; the rejection of which will likewise tend to make our narration more forcible, and more clear.

Cicero is very remarkable for his talent of narration; and from the examples in his orations much may be learned. The narration, for instance, in the celebrated oration *pro Milone*, has been often and justly admired. His scope is to show, that though in fact Clodius was killed by Milo, or his servants, yet that it was only in self-defence; and that the design had been laid, not by Milo against Clodius, but by Clodius against Milo's life. All the circumstances for rendering this probable are painted with wonderful art. In relating the manner of Milo's setting out from Rome, he gives the most natural description of a family excursion to the country, under which it was impossible that any bloody design could be concealed. "He remained," says he, "in the Senate-house that day, till all the business was over. He came home, changed his clothes deliberately, and waited for some time, till his

“ wife had got all her things ready for going with
“ him in his carriage to the country. He did not
“ set out till such time as Clodius might easily
“ have been in Rome, if he had not been lying
“ in wait for Milo by the way. By and by, Clo-
“ dius met him on the road, on horseback, like a
“ man prepared for action, no carriage, nor his
“ wife, as was usual, nor any family equipage
“ along with him ; whilst Milo, who is supposed
“ to be meditating slaughter and assassination, is
“ travelling in a carriage with his wife, wrapped
“ up in his cloak, embarrassed with baggage, and
“ attended by a great train of women servants,
“ and boys.” He goes on, describing the rencoun-
ter that followed; Clodius’s servants attacking
those of Milo, and killing the driver of his car-
riage; Milo jumping out, throwing off his cloak,
and making the best defence he could, while Clo-
dius’s servants endeavoured to surround him ; and
then concludes his narration with a very delicate
and happy stroke. He does not say in plain words,
that Milo’s servants killed Clodius, but that, “ in
“ the midst of the tumult, Milo’s servants, without
“ the orders, without the knowledge, without the
“ presence of their master, did what every master
“ would have wished his servants, in a like con-
“ juncture, to have done *.”

* “ Milo, cùm in senatu fuisse eo die ; quod senatus dimis-
sus est, domum venit. Calceos et vestimenta mutavit ; pau-

In sermons, where there is seldom any occasion for narration, explication of the subject to be discoursed on, comes in the place of narration at the bar, and is to be taken up much on the same tone ; that is, it must be concise, clear and distinct : and in a style correct and elegant, rather than highly adorned. To explain the doctrine of the text with propriety ; to give a full and perspicuous account of the nature of that virtue or duty which forms the subject of the discourse, is properly the didac-

“ lisper, dum se uxor (ut fit) comparat, commoratus est; deinde
“ profectus est, id temporis cùm jam Clodius, si quidem eo die
“ Romam venturus erat, redire potuisset. Obviam fit ei Clodius
“ expeditus, in equo, nulla rheda, nullis impedimentis, nullis
“ Græcis comitibus, ut solebat ; sine uxore, quod nunquam fere.
“ Cum hic insidiator, qui iter illud ad cædem faciendam appa-
“ rasset, cum uxore veheretur in rheda, penulatus, vulgi magno
“ impedimento, ac muliebri et delicato ancillarum puerorumque
“ comitatu. Fit obviam Cludio ante fundum ejus, hora fere un-
“ decima, aut non multosecus. Statim complures cum telis in hunc
“ faciunt de loco superiore impetum: adversi rhedarium occidunt
“ cùm autem hic de rheda, rejecta penula desiluisset, sequi acri
“ animo defenderet, illi qui erant cum Cladio, gladiis eductis,
“ partim recurrere ad rhedam, ut a tergo Milonem adorirentur ;
“ partim, quod hunc jam interfectum putarent, cædere incipiunt
“ ejus servos qui post erant ; ex quibus qui animo fidelí in domi-
“ num et præsenti fuerunt, partim occisi sunt ; partim cum ad
“ rhedam pugnare viderunt, et dominio succurrere prohiberentur,
“ Milonemque occisum etiam ex ipso Clodio audirent, et ita esse
“ putarent, fecerunt id servi Milonis (dicam enim non derivandi
“ criminis causâ, sed ut factum est) neque imperante, neque
“ sciente, neque præsente domino, quod suos quisque servos in
“ tali re facere voluisset.”

tic part of preaching; on the right execution of which much depends for all that comes afterwards in the way of persuasion. The great art in succeeding in it, is, to meditate profoundly on the subject, so as to be able to place it in a clear and strong point of view. Consider what light other passages of Scripture throw upon it; consider whether it be a subject nearly related to some other from which it is proper to distinguish it; consider whether it can be illustrated to advantage by comparing it with, or opposing it to, some other thing; by inquiring into causes, or tracing effects: by pointing out examples, or appealing to the feelings of the hearers; that thus, a definite, precise, circumstantial view may be afforded of the doctrine to be inculcated. Let the preacher be persuaded, that, by such distinct and apt illustrations of the known truths of religion, it may both display great merit in the way of composition, and, what he ought to consider as far more valuable, render his discourses weighty, instructive, and useful.

LECTURE XXXII.

CONDUCT OF A DISCOURSE—THE ARGUMENTATIVE PART—THE PATHETIC PART—THE PERORATION.

IN treating of the constituent parts of a regular discourse or oration, I have already considered the introduction, the division, and the narration or explication. I proceed next to treat of the argumentative or reasoning part of a discourse. In whatever place, or on whatever subject one speaks, this, beyond doubt, is of the greatest consequence. For the great end for which men speak on any serious occasion, is to convince their hearers of something being either true, or right, or good; and, by means of this conviction, to influence their practice. Reason and argument make the foundation, as I have often inculcated, of all manly and persuasive eloquence.

Now, with respect to arguments, three things are requisite. First, the invention of them; secondly, the proper disposition and arrangement of them; and thirdly, the expressing of them in

such a style and manner, as to give them their full force.

The first of these, invention, is, without doubt, the most material, and the ground-work of the rest. But with respect to this, I am afraid it is beyond the power of art to give any real assistance. Art cannot go so far, as to supply a speaker with arguments on every cause, and every subject ; though it may be of considerable use in assisting him to arrange and express those, which his knowledge of the subject has discovered. For it is one thing to discover the reasons that are most proper to convince men, and another to manage these reasons with the most advantage. The latter is all that rhetoric can pretend to.

The ancient rhetoricians did indeed attempt to go much farther than this. They attempted to form rhetoric into a more complete system ; and professed not only to assist public speakers in setting off their arguments to most advantage ; but to supply the defect of their invention, and to teach them where to find arguments on every subject and cause. Hence their doctrine of topics, or “*Loci Communes*,” and “*Sedes Argumentorum*,” which makes so great a figure in the writings of Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian. These topics, or loci, were no other than general ideas applicable to a great many different subjects, which the orator was directed to consult, in order to find out

materials for his speech. They had their intrinsic and extrinsic loci ; some loci, that were common to all the different kinds of public speaking, and some that were peculiar to each. The common or general loci, were such as genus and species, cause and effect, antecedents and consequents, likeness and contrariety, definition, circumstances of time and place ; and a great many more of the same kinds. For each of the different kinds of public speaking, they had their “ Loci Personarum,” and “ Loci Rerum :” As in demonstrative orations, for instance, the heads from which any one could be decried or praised ; his birth, his country, his education, his kindred, the qualities of his body, the qualities of his mind, the fortune he enjoyed, the stations he had filled, &c. ; and in deliberative orations, the topics that might be used in recommending any public measure, or dissuading from it ; such as honesty, justice, facility, profit, pleasure, glory, assistance from friends, mortification to enemies, and the like.

The Grecian Sophists were the first inventors of this artificial system of oratory ; and they showed a prodigious subtilty and fertility in the contrivance of these loci. Succeeding rhetoricians, dazzled by the plan, wrought them up into so regular a system, that one would think they meant to teach how a person might mechanically become an orator, without any genius at all. They gave him receipts for making speeches, on all manner

of subjects. At the same time, it is evident, that though this study of common places might produce very showy academical declamations, it could never produce useful discourses on real business. The loci indeed supplied a most exuberant fecundity of matter. One who had no other aim but to talk copiously and plausibly, by consulting them on every subject, and laying hold of all that they suggested, might discourse without end ; and that too, though he had none but the most superficial knowledge of his subject. But such discourse could be no other than trivial. What is truly solid and persuasive, must be drawn “ *ex visceribus causæ*,” from a thorough knowledge of the subject, and profound meditation on it. They who would direct students of oratory to any other sources of argumentation, only delude them ; and by attempting to render rhetoric too perfect an art, they render it, in truth, a trifling and childish study.

On this doctrine, therefore, of the rhetorical loci, or topics, I think it superfluous to insist. If any think that the knowledge of them may contribute to improve their invention, and extend their views, they must consult Aristotle and Quintilian, or what Cicero has written on this head, in his Treatise *De Inventione*, his *Topica*, and second book *De Oratore*. But when they are to prepare a discourse, by which they purpose to convince a judge, or to produce any considerable effect upon an assembly, I would advise them to lay aside their

common places, and to think closely of their subject. Demosthenes, I dare say, consulted none of the loci, when he was inciting the Athenians to take arms against Philip ; and where Cicero has had recourse to them, his orations are so much the worse on that account.

I proceed to what is of more real use, to point out the assistance that can be given, not with respect to the invention, but with respect to the disposition and conduct of arguments.

Two different methods may be used by orators in the conduct of their reasoning ; the terms of art for which are, the analytic, and the synthetic method. The analytic is, when the orator conceals his intention concerning the point he is to prove, till he has gradually brought his hearers to the designed conclusion. They are led on, step by step, from one known truth to another, till the conclusion be stolen upon them, as the natural consequence of a chain of propositions. As, for instance, when one intending to prove the being of a God, sets out with observing that every thing which we see in the world has had a beginning ; that whatever has had a beginning, must have had a prior cause ; that in human productions, art shown in the effect, necessarily infers design in the cause ; and proceeds leading you on from one cause to another, till you arrive at one supreme first cause, from whom is derived all the order

and design visible in his works. This is much the same with the Socratic method, by which that philosopher silenced the sophists of his age. It is a very artful method of reasoning; may be carried on with much beauty, and is proper to be used when the hearers are much prejudiced against any truth, and by imperceptible steps must be led to conviction.

But there are few subjects that will admit this method, and not many occasions on which it is proper to be employed. The mode of reasoning most generally used, and most suited to the train of popular speaking, is what is called the synthetic; when the point to be proved is fairly laid down, and one argument after another is made to bear upon it, till the hearers be fully convinced.

Now, in all arguing, one of the first things to be attended to is, among the various arguments which may occur upon a cause, to make a proper selection of such as appear to one's self the most solid; and to employ these as the chief means of persuasion. Every speaker should place himself in the situation of a hearer, and think how he would be affected by those reasons, which he pur-
poses to employ for persuading others. For he must not expect to impose on mankind by mere arts of speech. They are not so easily imposed on, as public speakers are sometimes apt to think.

Shrewdness and sagacity are found among all ranks ; and the speaker may be praised for his fine discourse, while yet the hearers are not persuaded of the truth of any one thing he has uttered.

Supposing the arguments properly chosen, it is evident that their effect will, in some measure, depend on the right arrangement of them, so as they shall not justle and embarrass one another, but give mutual aid ; and bear with the fairest and fullest direction on the point in view. Concerning this, the following rules may be taken :

In the first place, Avoid blending arguments confusedly together, that are of a separate nature. All arguments whatever are directed to prove one or other of these three things ; that something is true ; that it is morally right or fit ; or that it is profitable and good. These make the three great subjects of discussion among mankind ; truth, duty, and interest. But the arguments directed towards any one of them are generically distinct ; and he who blends them all under one topic, which he calls his argument, as in sermons especially, is too often done, will render his reasoning indistinct and inelegant. Suppose, for instance, that I am recommending to an audience benevolence, or the love of our neighbour ; and that I take my first argument from the inward satisfaction which a benevolent temper affords ; my second

from the obligation which the example of Christ lays upon us to this duty ; and my third, from its tendency to procure us the good-will of all around us ; my arguments are good, but I have arranged them wrong ; for my first and third arguments are taken from considerations of interest, internal peace, and external advantages ; and between these, I have introduced one, which rests wholly upon duty. I should have kept those classes of arguments, which are addressed to different principles in human nature, separate and distinct.

In the second place, With regard to the different degrees of strength in arguments, the general rule is, to advance in the way of climax, “ *ut augeatur semper, et increscat oratio.* ” This especially is to be the course, when the speaker has a clear cause, and is confident that he can prove it fully. He may then adventure to begin with feebler arguments ; rising gradually, and not putting forth his whole strength till the last, when he can trust to his making a successful impression on the minds of hearers, prepared by what has gone before. But this rule is not to be always followed. For, if he distrusts his cause, and has but one material argument on which to lay the stress, putting less confidence in the rest, in this case, it is often proper for him to place this material argument in the front ; to pre-occupy the hearers early, and make the strongest effort at first : that, having removed prejudices, and disposed them to be favourable, the

rest of his reasoning may be listened to with more candour. When it happens, that amidst a variety of arguments, there are one or two which we are sensible are more inconclusive than the rest, and yet proper to be used, Cicero advises to place these in the middle, as a station less conspicuous than either the beginning, or the end, of the train of reasoning.

In the third place, When our arguments are strong and satisfactory, the more they are distinguished and treated apart from each other, the better: Each can then bear to be brought out by itself, placed in its full light, amplified and rested upon. But when our arguments are doubtful, and only of the presumptive kind, it is safer to throw them together in a crowd, and to run them into one another: “ut quæ sunt natura imbecilla,” as Quintilian speaks, “mutuo auxilio sustineantur;” that though infirm of themselves, they may serve mutually to prop each other. He gives a good example, in the case of one who was accused of murdering a relation, to whom he was heir. Direct proof was wanting; but, “you expected a succession; and a great succession; you were in distress circumstances; you were pushed to the utmost by your creditors; you had offended your relation, who had made you his heir, you knew that he was just then intending to alter his will; no time was to be lost. Each of these particulars, by itself,” says the author, “is inconclusive;

“ but when they were assembled in one groupe,
“ they have effect.”

Of the distinct amplification of one persuasive argument, we have a most beautiful example in Cicero's oration for Milo. The argument is taken from a circumstance of time. Milo was candidate for the consulship; and Clodius was killed a few days before the election. He asks, if any one could believe that Milo would be mad enough, at such a critical time, by a most odious assassination, to alienate from himself the favour of people, whose suffrages he was so anxiously courting? This argument, the moment it is suggested, appears to have considerable weight. But it was not enough, simply to suggest it; it could bear to be dwelt upon, and brought out into full light. The orator, therefore, draws a just and striking picture of that solicitous attention with which candidates, at such a season, always found it necessary to cultivate the good opinion of the people; “ Quo tempore,” says he, “ (Scio enim quam ti-
“ mida sit ambitio, quantaque et quam sollicita,
“ cupiditas consolatūs) omnia, non modo quæ re-
“ prehendi palam, sed etiam quæ obscure cogitari
“ possunt, timemus. Rumorem, fabulam fictam
“ et falsam, perhorrescimus; ora omnium atque
“ oculos intuemur. Nihil enim est tam tenerum,
“ tam aut fragile aut flexibile, quam voluntas ergo
“ nos sensusque civium, qui non modo improbitati
“ irascuntur candida torum, sed etiam in recte fac-

“ tis saepe fastidiunt.” From all which he most justly concludes, “ Hunc diem igitur campi, spe-
“ ratum atque exoptatum, sibi proponens Milo,
“ cruentis manibus, scelus atque facinus præ se
“ ferens, ad illa centuriarum auspicia veniebat?
“ Quam hoc in illo minimum credibile *?” But though such amplification as this be extremely beautiful, I must add a caution,

In the fourth place, against extending arguments too far, and multiplying them too much. This serves rather to render a cause suspected, than to give it weight. An unnecessary multiplicity of arguments both burdens the memory, and detracts from the weight of that conviction which

* “ Well do I know to what length the timidity goes of such
“ as are candidates for public offices, and how many anxious
“ cares and attentions, a canvass for the consulship necessarily
“ carries along with it. On such an occasion, we are afraid not
“ only of what we may openly be reproached with, but of what
“ others may think of us in secret. The slightest rumour, the
“ most improbable tale that can be devised to our prejudice, alarms
“ and disconcerts us. We study the countenance, and the looks,
“ of all around us. For nothing is so delicate, so frail and uncer-
“ tain, as the public favour. Our fellow-citizens not only are
“ justly offended with the vices of candidates, but even, on occa-
“ sion of meritorious actions, are apt to conceive capricious dis-
“ gusts. Is there then the least credibility that Milo, after having
“ so long fixed his attention on the important and wished-for day
“ of election, would dare to have any thoughts of presenting him-
“ self before the august assembly of the people, as a murderer
“ and assassin, with his hands embrued in blood ?”

a few well-chosen arguments carry. It is to be observed too, that in the amplification of arguments, a diffuse and spreading method, beyond the bounds of reasonable illustration, is always enfeebling. It takes off greatly from that “vis et “acumen,” which should be the distinguishing character of the argumentative part of a discourse. When a speaker dwells long on a favourite argument, and seeks to turn it into every possible light, it almost always happens, that, fatigued with the effort, he loses the spirit with which he set out, and concludes with feebleness what he began with force. There is a proper temperance in reasoning as there is in other parts of a discourse.

After due attention given to the proper arrangement of arguments, what is next requisite for their success, is to express them in such a style, and to deliver them in such a manner, as shall give them full force. On these heads I must refer the reader to the directions I have given in treating of style, in former Lectures; and to the directions I am afterwards to give concerning pronunciation and delivery.

I proceed, therefore, next to another essential part of discourse which I mentioned as the fifth in order, that is, the pathetic; in which, if anywhere, eloquence reigns, and exerts its power. I shall not, in beginning this head, take up time in

combating the scruples of those who have moved a question, whether it be consistent with fairness and candour in a public speaker, to address the passions of his audience? This is a question about words alone, and which common sense easily determines. In inquiries after mere truth, in matters of simple information and instruction, there is no question that the passions have no concern, and that all attempts to move them are absurd. Wherever conviction is the object, it is the understanding alone that is to be applied to. It is by argument and reasoning, that one man attempts to satisfy another of what is true or right, or just; but if persuasion be the object, the case is changed. In all that relates to practice, there is no man who seriously means to persuade another, but addresses himself to his passions more or less; for this plain reason, that passions are the great springs of human action. The most virtuous man, in treating of the most virtuous subject, seeks to touch the heart of him to whom he speaks; and makes no scruple to raise his indignation at injustice, or his pity to the distressed, though pity and indignation be passions.

In treating of this part of eloquence, the ancients made the same sort of attempt as they employed with respect to the argumentative part, in order to bring rhetoric into a more perfect system. They inquired metaphysically into the nature of every passion; they gave a definition and a de-

scription of it ; they treated of its causes, its effects, and its concomitants ; and thence deduced rules for working upon it. Aristotle in particular has, in his Treatise upon Rhetoric, discussed the nature of the passions with much profoundness and subtilty ; and what he has written on that head, may be read with no small profit, as a valuable piece of moral philosophy ; but whether it will have any effect in rendering an orator more pathetic, is to me doubtful. It is not, I am afraid, any philosophical knowledge of the passions, that can confer this talent. We must be indebted for it to nature, a certain strong and happy sensibility of mind ; and one may be a most thorough adept in all the speculative knowledge that can be acquired concerning the passions, and remain at the same time a cold and dry speaker. The use of rules and instructions on this or any other part of oratory, is not to supply the want of genius, but to direct it where it is found, into its proper channel ; to assist it in exerting itself with most advantage, and to prevent the errors and extravagancies into which it is sometimes apt to run. On the head of the pathetic, the following directions appear to me to be useful.

The first is to consider carefully, whether the subject admits the pathetic, and render it proper ; and if it does, what part of the discourse is the most proper for attempting it. To determine these points belongs to good sense ; for it is evident, that

there are many subjects which admit not the pathetic at all, and that even in those that are susceptible of it, an attempt to excite the passions in the wrong place, may expose an orator to ridicule. All that can be said in general is, that if we expect any emotion which we raise to have a lasting effect, we must be careful to bring over to our side, in the first place, the understanding and judgment. The hearers must be convinced that there are good and sufficient grounds for their entering with warmth into the cause. They must be able to justify to themselves the passions which they feel ; and remain satisfied that they are not carried away by mere delusion. Unless their minds be brought into this state, although they may have been heated by the orator's discourse, yet, as soon as he ceases to speak, they will resume their ordinary tone of thought ; and the emotion which he has raised will die entirely away. Hence most writers assign the pathetic to the peroration or conclusion, as its natural place ; and, no doubt, all other things being equal, this is the impression that one would chuse to make last, leaving the minds of the hearers warmed with the subject, after argument and reasoning had produced their full effect : but wherever it is introduced, I must advise,

In the second place, Never to set apart a head of a discourse in form, for raising any passion ; never give warning that you are about to be pathetic ; and call upon your hearers, as is sometimes

done, to follow you in the attempt. This almost never fails to prove a refrigerant to passion. It puts the hearers immediately on their guard, and disposes them for criticising, much more than for being moved. The indirect method of making an impression is likely to be more successful, when you seize the critical moment that is favourable to emotion, in whatever part of the discourse it occurs, and then, after due preparation, throw in such circumstances, and present such glowing images, as may kindle their passions before they are aware. This can often be done more happily in a few sentences inspired by natural warmth, than in a long and studied address.

In the third place, It is necessary to observe, that there is a great difference between showing the hearers that they ought to be moved, and actually moving them. This distinction is not sufficiently attended to, especially by preachers, who, if they have a head in their sermon to show how much we are bound to be grateful to God, or to be compassionate to the distress, are apt to imagine this to be a pathetic part. Now, all the arguments you produce to shew me, why it is my duty, why it is reasonable and fit, that I should be moved in a certain way, go no farther than to dispose or prepare me for entering into such an emotion; but they do not actually excite it. To every emotion or passion, nature has adapted a set of corresponding objects; and, without setting

these before the mind, it is not in the power of any orator to raise that emotion. I am warmed with gratitude, I am touched with compassion, not when a speaker shews me that these are noble dispositions, and that it is my duty to feel them ; or when he exclaims against me for my indifference and coldness. All this time, he is speaking only to my reason or conscience. He must describe the kindness and tenderness of my friend; he must set before me the distress suffered by the person for whom he would interest me ; then, and not till then, my heart begins to be touched, my gratitude or my compassion begins to flow. The foundation, therefore, of all successful execution in the way of pathetic oratory is, to paint the object of that passion which we wish to raise, in the most natural and striking manner ; to describe it with such circumstances as are likely to awaken it in the minds of others. Every passion is most strongly excited by sensation ; as anger by the feeling of an injury, or the presence of the injurer. Next to the influence of sense, is that of memory ; and next to memory, is the influence of the imagination. Of this power, therefore, the orator must avail himself, so as to strike the imagination of the hearers with circumstances which, in lustre and steadiness, resemble those of sensation and remembrance. In order to accomplish this,

In the fourth place, the only effectual method is, to be moved yourselves. There are a thousand

interesting circumstances suggested by real passion which no art can imitate, and no refinement can supply. There is obviously a contagion among the passions.

*Ut ridentibus arrident, sic flentibus adflent.
Humani vultus.*

The internal emotion of the speaker adds a pathos to his words, his looks, his gestures, and his whole manner, which exerts a power almost irresistible over those who hear him *. But on this point, though the most material of all, I shall not now insist, as I have often had occasion before to show, that all attempts towards becoming pathetic, when we are not moved ourselves, expose us to certain ridicule.

Quinetilian, who discourses upon this subject with much good sense, takes pains to inform us of the method which he used, when he was a public speaker, for entering into those passions which he wanted to excite in others ; setting before his own imagination what he calls “ Phan-

* “ Quid enim aliud est causæ ut lugentes, in recenti dolore. “ dissertissime quædam exclamare videantur ; et ira nonunquam “ in indoctis quoque eloquentiam faciat ; quam quod illis inest “ vis mentis, et veritas ipsa morum ? quare in iis quæ verisimilia “ esse volumus, simus ipsi similes eorum qui vere patiuntur, af- “ fectibus ; et a tali animo proficiscatur oratio qualem facere ju- “ dicem volet. Afficiamur antequam afficere conemur.”

tasiæ, or Visiones," strong pictures of the distress or indignities which they had suffered, whose cause he was to plead, and for whom he was to interest his hearers; dwelling upon these, and putting himself in their situation, till he was affected by a passion similar to that which the persons themselves had felt*. To this method he attributes all the success he ever had in public speaking; and there can be no doubt that whatever tends to increase an orator's sensibility, will add greatly to his pathetic powers.

In the fifth place, It is necessary to attend to the proper language of the passions. We should observe in what manner any one expresses himself who is under the power of a real and strong passion; and we shall always find his language unaffected and simple. It may be animated, indeed, with bold and strong figures, but it will have no ornament or finery. He is not at leisure to follow out the play of imagination. His mind be-

* " Ut hominem occisum querar ; non omnia quæ in re pre-
 " senti accidisse credibile est, in oculis habebo ? Non percussor
 " ille subitus erumpet ? non expavescet circumventus ? exclama-
 " bit, vel rogabit, vel fugiet ? non ferientem, non concidentem
 " videbo ? non animo sanguis, et pallor, et gemitus, extremus
 " denique expirantis hiatus, insidet ?—Ubi vero miseratione opus
 " erit, nobis ea de quibus querimur accidisse credamus atque id
 " animo nostro persuadeamus. Nos illi simus, quos gravia, in-
 " digna, tristia, passos queramur. Nec agamus rem quasi aliena-
 " nam ; sed assumamus parumper illum dolorem. Ita dicemus
 " quæ in simili nostro casu dicturi essemus." Lib. 6.

ing wholly seized by one object, which has heated it, he has no other aim, but to represent that in all its circumstances, as strongly as he feels it. This must be the style of the orator, when he would be pathetic, and this will be his style, if he speaks from real feeling; bold, ardent, simple. No sort of description will then succeed, but what is written “fervente calamo.” If he stay till he can work up his style, and polish and adorn it, he will infallibly cool his own ardour; and then he will touch the heart no more. His composition will become frigid; it will be the language of one who describes, but who does not feel. We must take notice, that there is a great difference between painting to the imagination, and painting to the heart. The one may be done coolly and at leisure; the other must always be rapid and ardent. In the former, art and labour may be suffered to appear; in the latter, no effect can follow, unless it seem to be the work of nature only.

In the sixth place, Avoid interweaving any thing of a foreign nature with the pathetic part of a discourse. Beware of all digressions, which may interrupt or turn aside the natural course of the passion, when once it begins to rise and swell. Sacrifice all beauties, however bright and showy, which would divert the mind from the principal object, and which would amuse the imagination, rather than touch the heart. Hence comparisons are always dangerous, and generally quite impro-

per, in the midst of passion. Beware even of reasoning unseasonably ; or, at least, of carrying on a long and subtle train of reasoning, on occasions when the principal aim is to excite warm emotions..

In the last place, Never attempt prolonging the pathetic too much. Warm emotions are too violent to be lasting *. Study the proper time of making a retreat ; of making a transition from the passionate to the calm tone ; in such a manner, however, as to descend without falling, by keeping up the same strain of sentiment that was carried on before, though now expressing it with more moderation. Above all things, beware of straining passion too far ; of attempting to raise it to unnatural heights. Preserve always a due regard to what the hearers will bear ; and remember, that he who stops not at the proper point ; who attempts to carry them farther, in passion, than they will follow him, destroys his whole design. By endeavouring to warm them too much, he takes the most effectual method of freezing them completely.

* “ Nanquam debet esse longa miseratio ; nam cum veros do-
“ lores mitiget tempus, citius evenescat, necesse est illa, quam di-
“ cendo effinximus, imago : in qua, si moramur, lacrymis fatiga-
“ tur auditor, et requiescit, et ab illo quem ceperat impetu, in ra-
“ tionem reddit. Non patiamur igitur frigescere hoc opus ; et ef-
“ fectum, cum ad summum perduxerimus, relinquamus; nec spe-
“ remus fore, ut aliena mala quisquam diu ploret.”

Having given these rules concerning the pathetic, I shall give one example from Cicero, which will serve to illustrate several of them, particularly the last. It shall be taken from his last oration against Verres, wherein he describes the cruelty exercised by Verres, when governor of Sicily, against one Gavius, a Roman citizen. This Gavius had made his escape from prison, into which he had been thrown by the governor ; and when just embarking at Messina, thinking himself now safe, had uttered some threats, that when he had once arrived at Rome, Verres should hear of him, and be brought to account for having put a Roman citizen in chains. The chief magistrate of Messina, a creature of Verres's, instantly apprehends him, and gives information of his threatenings. The behaviour of Verres, on this occasion, is described in the most picturesque manner, and with all the colours which were proper, in order to excite against him the public indignation. He thanks the magistrate of Messina for his diligence. Filled with rage, he comes into the forum ; orders Gavius to be brought forth, the executioners to attend, and against the laws, and contrary to the well-known privileges of a Roman citizen, commands him to be stripped naked, bound, and scourged publicly in a cruel manner. Cicero then proceeds thus : “ Cædebatur virgis, in medio foro “ Messanæ, civis Romanus, judices !” every word rises above another in describing this flagrant enormity ; and “ Judices,” is brought out at the

end with the greatest propriety ; “ Cædebatur
 “ virgis, in medio foro Messanæ, civis Romanus,
 “ Judges ! cum interea, nullus gemitus, nulla vox
 “ alia istius miseri, inter dolorem crepitumque
 “ plagarum audiebatur, nisi hæc, civis Romanus
 “ sum. Hâc se commemoratione civitatis, omnia
 “ verbera depulsurum a corpore arbitrabatur. Is
 “ non modo hoc non perfecit, ut virgarum vim de-
 “ precaretur, sed cum imploraret sæpius usurpa-
 “ retque nomen civis, crux, crux inquam, infelici
 “ isto et ærumnoso, qui nunquam istam potesta-
 “ tem viderat, comparabatur. O nomen dulce
 “ libertatis ! O jus eximium nostræ civitatis ! O
 “ lex Porcia, legesque Semproniæ !—Huccine om-
 “ nia tandem reciderunt, ut civis Romanus, in
 “ provincia populi Romani, in oppido foederato-
 “ rum, ab eo qui beneficio populi Romani fasces
 “ et secures haberet, deligatus, in foro, virgis cæ-
 “ deretur * !”

* “ In the midst of the market-place of Messina, a Roman citizen, O Judges ! was cruelly scourged with rods ; when, in the mean time, amidst the noise of the blows which he suffered, no voice, no complaint of this unhappy man was heard, except this exclamation, Remember that I am a Roman citizen ! By pleading this privilege of his birth-right, he hoped to have stopped the strokes of the executioner. But his hopes were vain ; for so far was he from being able to obtain thereby any mitigation of his torture, that when he continued to repeat this exclamation, and to plead the rights of a citizen, a cross, a cross, I say, was preparing to be set up for the execution of this unfortunate person, who never before had beheld that instrument

Nothing can be finer, nor better conducted than this passage. The circumstances are well chosen for exciting both the compassion of his hearers for Gavius, and their indignation against Verres. The style is simple; and the passionate exclamation, the address to liberty and the laws, is well-timed, and in the proper style of passion. The orator goes on to exaggerate Verres's cruelty still farther, by another very striking circumstance. He ordered a gibbet to be erected for Gavius, not in the common place of execution, but just by the sea-shore, over against the coast of Italy. " Let " him," said he, " who boasts so much of his be-
 " ing a Roman citizen, take a view from his gib-
 " bet of his own country.—This base insult over
 " a dying man is the least part of his guilt. It
 " was not Gavius alone that Verres meant to in-
 " sult; but it was you, O Romans! it was every
 " citizen who now hears me; in the person of
 " Gavius, he scoffed at your rights, and showed
 " in what contempt he held the Roman name,
 " and Roman liberties."

" of cruel death. O sacred and honoured name of liberty! O
 " boasted and revered privilege of a Roman citizen! O ye Por-
 " cian and Sempronian laws! to this issue have ye all come, that
 " a citizen of Rome, in a province of the Roman empire, within
 " an allied city, should publicly, in a market place, be loaded
 " with chains, and beaten with rods, at the command of one who,
 " from the favour of the Roman people alone, derived all his au-
 " thority and ensigns of power!"

Hitherto all is beautiful, animated, pathetic; and the model would have been perfect, if Cicero had stopped at this point. But his redundant and florid genius carried him farther. He must needs interest not his hearers only, but the beasts, the mountains, and the stones, against Verres : “ Si
 “ hæc non ad cives Romanos, non ad amicos nos-
 “ træ civitatis, non ad eos qui populi Romani no-
 “ men audissent ; denique si non ad homines,
 “ verum ad bestias ; atque ut longius progrediar,
 “ si in aliqua desertissima solitudine, ad saxa et
 “ ad scopulos hæc conqueri et deplorare vellem,
 “ tamen omnia muta atque inanima, tantâ et
 “ tam indignâ rerum atrocitate commoverentur *.” This, with all the deference due to so eloquent an orator, we must pronounce to be declamatory, not pathetic. This is straining the language of passion too far. Every hearer sees this immediately to be a studied figure of rhetoric ; it may assume him, but instead of inflaming him more, it, in truth, cools his passion. So dangerous it is to give scope to a flowery imagination, when one intends to make a strong and passionate impression.

* “ Were I employed in lamenting those instances of an atrocious oppression and cruelty, not among an assembly of Roman citizens, not among the allies of our state, not among those who had ever heard the name of the Roman people, not even among human creatures, but in the midst of the brute creation ; and to go farther, were I pouring forth my lamentations to the stones, and to the rocks, in some remote and desert wilderness, even those mute and inanimate beings would, at the recital of such shocking indignities, be thrown into commotion.”

No other part of discourse remains now to be treated of, except the peroration, or conclusion. Concerning this, it is needless to say much, because it must vary so considerably, according to the strain of the preceding discourse. Sometimes, the whole pathetic part comes in most properly at the peroration. Sometimes, when the discourse has been entirely argumentative, it is fit to conclude with summing up the arguments, placing them in one view, and leaving the impression of them full and strong on the mind of the audience. For the great rule of a conclusion, and what nature obviously suggests, is, to place that last on which we choose that the strength of our cause should rest.

In sermons, inferences from what has been said, make a common conclusion. With regard to these, care should be taken, not only that they rise naturally, but (what is less commonly attended to) that they should so much agree with the strain of sentiment throughout the discourse, as not to break the unity of the sermon. For inferences, how justly soever they may be deduced from the doctrine of the text, yet have a bad effect, if, at the conclusion of a discourse, they introduce some subject altogether new, and turn off our attention from the main object to which the preacher had directed our thoughts. They appear, in this case, like excrescences jutting out from the body, which form an unnatural addition to it; and tend to en-

feeble the impression which the composition, as a whole, is calculated to make.

The most eloquent of the French, perhaps, indeed, of all modern orators, Bossuet, bishop of Meaux, terminates in a very moving manner, his funeral oration on the great Prince of Condé, with this return upon himself, and his old age : Accept,
“ O Prince ! these last efforts of a voice which you
“ once well knew. With you all my funeral dis-
“ courses are now to end. Instead of deplored
“ the death of others, henceforth, it shall be my
“ study to learn from you, how my own may be
“ blessed. Happy, if warned by those grey hairs,
“ of the account which I must soon give of my
“ ministry, I reserve, solely for that flock whom I
“ ought to feed with the word of life, the feeble
“ remains of a voice which now trembles, and of
“ an ardour which is now on the point of being
“ extinct *.”

* “ Agréez ces derniers efforts d'une voix que vous fut connue.
“ Vous mettrez fin à tous ces discours. Au lieu de déplorer la
“ mort des autres, Grand Prince ! dorenavant je veux apprendre
“ de vous, à rendre la mienne sainte. Heureux, si averti par ces
“ cheveux blancs, du compte que je dois rendre de mon adminis-
“ tration, je reserve au troupeau que je dois nourrir de la parole
“ de vie, les restes, d'une voix que tombe, et d'une ardeur qui
“ s'éteint.”— These are the last sentences of that oration : but the
whole of the peroration from that passage, “ Venez, peuples,
venez maintenant,” &c. though it is too long for insertion, is a
great master-piece of pathetic eloquence.

In all discourses, it is a matter of importance to hit the precise time of concluding, so as to bring our discourse just to a point; neither ending abruptly and unexpectedly; nor disappointing the expectation of the hearers, when they look for the close; and continuing to hover round and round the conclusion, till they become heartily tired of us. We should endeavour to go off with a good grace; not to end with a languishing and drawling sentence; but to close with dignity and spirit, that we may leave the minds of the hearers warm; and dismiss them with a favourable impression of the subject and of the speaker.

LECTURE XXXIII.

PRONUNCIATION, OR DELIVERY.

HAVING treated of several general heads relating to eloquence, or public speaking, I now proceed to another very important part of the subject yet remaining, that is, the pronunciation, or delivery of a discourse. How much stress was laid upon this by the most eloquent of all orators, Demosthenes, appears from a noted saying of his, related both by Cicero and Quintilian; when being asked, What was the first point in Oratory? he answered Delivery; and being asked, What was the second; and afterwards, What was the third? he still answered Delivery. There is no wonder that he should have rated this so high, and that for improving himself in it, he should have employed those assiduous and painful labours, which all the ancients takes so much notice of; for beyond doubt, nothing is of more importance. To superficial thinkers, the management of the voice and gesture, in public speaking, may appear to relate to decoration only, and to be one of the inferior arts of catching an audience. But this is

far from being the case. It is intimately connected with what is, or ought to be, the end of all public speaking, persuasion ; and therefore deserves the study of the most grave and serious speakers, as much as of those whose only aim it is to please.

For let it be considered, whenever we address ourselves to others by words, our intention certainly is to make some impression on those to whom we speak ; it is to convey to them our own ideas and emotions. Now the tone of our voice, our looks, and gestures, interpret our ideas and emotions no less than words do ; nay, the impression they make on others, is frequently much stronger than any that words can make. We often see, that an expressive look, or a passionate cry, unaccompanied by words, conveys to others more forcible ideas, and rouses within them stronger passions, than can be communicated by the most eloquent discourse. The signification of our sentiments, made by tones and gestures, has this advantage above that made by words, that it is the language of nature. It is that method of interpreting our mind which nature has dictated to all, and which is understood by all ; whereas, words are only arbitrary conventional symbols of our ideas ; and, by consequence, must make a more feeble impression. So true is this, that, to render words fully significant, they must, almost in every case, receive some aid from the manner

of pronunciation and delivery ; and he who, in speaking, should employ bare words, without enforcing them by proper tones and accents, would leave us with a faint and indistinct impression, often with a doubtful and ambiguous conception of what he had delivered. Nay, so close is the connection between certain sentiments and the proper manner of pronouncing them, that he who does not pronounce them, after that manner, can never persude us, that he believes, or feels, the sentiments themselves. His delivery may be such as to give the lie to all that he asserts. When Marcus Callidius accused one of an attempt to poison him, but enforced his accusation in a languid manner, and without any warmth or earnestness of delivery, Cicero, who pleaded for the accused person, improved this into an argument of the falsity of the charge, “ *An tu, M. Calidi, nisi fingeres, sic ageres?* ” In Shakespeare’s Richard II. the duchess of York thus impeaches the sincerity of her husband :

Pleads he in earnest ?—Look upon his face,
His eyes do drop no tears ; his prayers are jest ;
His words come from his mouth ; ours, from our breast ;
He prays but faintly, and would be denied ;
We pray with heart and soul.

But, I believe, it is needless to say any more in order to show the high importance of a good delivery. I proceed, therefore, to such observations as appear to me most useful to be made on this head.

The great objects which every public speaker will naturally have in his eye in forming his delivery, are, first, to speak so as to be fully and easily understood by all who hear him ; and next, to speak with grace and force so as to please and to move his audience. Let us consider what is most important with respect to each of these *.

In order to be fully and easily understood, the four chief requisites are, a due degree of loudness of voice ; distinctness ; slowness ; and propriety of pronunciation.

The first attention of every public speaker, doubtless, must be to make himself be heard by all those to whom he speaks. He must endeavour to fill with his voice, the space occupied by the assembly. This power of voice, it may be thought, is wholly a natural talent. It is so in a good measure ; but, however, may receive considerable assistance from art. Much depends for this purpose on the proper pitch, and management of the voice. Every man has three pitches in his voice; the high, the middle, and the low one. The high, is that which he uses in calling aloud to some one at a distance. The low is, when he approaches to a whisper. The middle is, that

* On this whole subject, Mr Sheridan's Lectures on Elocution are very worthy of being consulted ; and several hints are here taken from them.

which he employs in common conversation, and which he should generally use in public discourse. For it is a great mistake, to imagine that one must take the highest pitch of his voice, in order to be well heard by a great assembly. This is confounding two things which are different, loudness, or strength of sound, with the key or note on which we speak. A speaker may render his voice louder, without altering the key ; and we shall always be able to give most body, most persevering force of sound, to that pitch of voice, to which in conversation we are accustomed. Whereas, by setting out on our highest pitch or key, we certainly allow ourselves less compass, and are likely to strain our voice before we have done. We shall fatigue ourselves, and speak with pain ; and whenever a man speaks with pain to himself, he is always heard with pain by his audience. Give the voice, therefore, full strength and swell of sound ; but always pitch it on your ordinary speaking key. Make it a constant rule never to utter a greater quantity of voice than you can afford without pain to yourselves, and without any extraordinary effort. As long as you keep within these bounds, the other organs of speech will be at liberty to discharge their several offices with ease ; and you will always have your voice under command. But whenever you transgress these bounds, you give up the reins, and have no longer any management of it. It is an useful rule too, in order to be well heard, to fix our eye on some

of the most distant persons in the assembly, and to consider ourselves as speaking to them. We naturally and mechanically utter our words with such a degree of strength, as to make ourselves be heard by one to whom we address ourselves, provided he be within the reach of our voice. As this is the case in common conversation, it will hold also in public speaking. But remember, that in public as well as in conversation, it is possible to offend by speaking too loud. This extreme hurts the ear, by making the voice come upon it in rumbling indistinct masses ; besides its giving the speaker the disagreeable appearance of one who endeavours to compel assent, by mere vehemence and force of sound.

In the next place, to being well heard, and clearly understood, distinctness of articulation contributes more, perhaps, than mere loudness of sound. The quantity of sound necessary to fill even a large space, is smaller than is commonly imagined ; and with distinct articulation, a man of a weak voice will make it reach farther than the strongest voice can reach without it. To this, therefore, every public speaker ought to pay great attention. He must give every sound which he utters its due proportion, and make every syllable, and even every letter in the word which he pronounces, be heard distinctly ; without slurring, whispering, or suppressing any of the proper sounds.

In the third place, in order to articulate distinctly, moderation is requisite with regard to the speed of pronouncing. Precipitancy of speech confounds all articulation, and all meaning. I need scarcely observe that there may be also an extreme on the opposite side. It is obvious, that a lifeless, drawling pronunciation, which allows the minds of the hearers to be always outrunning the speaker, must render every discourse insipid and fatiguing. But the extreme of speaking too fast is much more common, and requires the more to be guarded against, because, when it has grown up into a habit, few errors are more difficult to be corrected. To pronounce with a proper degree of slowness, and with full and clear articulation, is the first thing to be studied by all who begin to speak in public; and cannot be too much recommended to them. Such a pronunciation gives weight and dignity to their discourse. It is a great assistance to the voice, by the pauses and rests which it allows it more easily to make; and it enables the speaker to swell all his sounds both with more force and more music. It assists him also in preserving a due command of himself; whereas a rapid and hurried manner is apt to excite that flutter of spirits, which is the greatest enemy to all right execution in the way of oratory. “*Promptum sit os,*” says Quintilian, “*non præceps, moderatum, non lentum.*”

After these fundamental attentions to the pitch and management of the voice, to distinct articula-

tion, and to a proper degree of slowness of speech, what a public speaker must, in the fourth place, study, is, propriety of pronunciation ; or the giving to every word, which he utters, that sound, which the most polite usage of the language appropriates to it ; in opposition to broad, vulgar, or provincial pronunciation. This is requisite, both for speaking intelligibly, and for speaking with grace or beauty. Instructions concerning this article can be given by the living voice only. But there is one observation, which it may not be improper here to make. In the English language, every word which consists of more syllables than one, has one accented syllable. The accent rests sometimes on the vowel, sometimes on the consonant. Seldom, or never, is there more than one accented syllable in any English word, however long ; and the genius of the language requires the voice to mark that syllable by a stronger percussion, and to pass more slightly over the rest. Now, after we have learned the proper seats of these accents, it is an important rule, to give every word just the same accent in public speaking, as in common discourse. Many persons err in this respect. When they speak in public, and with solemnity, they pronounce the syllables in a different manner from what they do at other times. They dwell upon them, and protract them ; they multiply accents on the same word; from a mistaken notion, that it gives gravity and force to their discourse, and adds to the pomp of public declamation. Whereas, this is one of the greatest faults that can be committed in pro-

nunciation ; it makes what is called a theatrical or mouthing manner ; and gives an artificial affected air to speech, which detracts greatly both from its agreeableness, and its impression.

I proceed to treat next of those higher parts of delivery, by studying which, a speaker has something farther in view than merely to render himself intelligible, and seeks to give grace and force to what he utters. These may be comprised under four heads, emphasis, pauses, tones, and gestures. Let me only premise, in general, to what I am to say concerning them, that attention to these articles of delivery is by no means to be confined, as some might be apt to imagine, to the more elaborate and pathetic parts of a discourse. There is, perhaps, as great attention requisite, and as much skill displayed, in adapting emphasis, pauses, tones, and gestures, properly, to calm and plain speaking ; and the effect of a just and graceful delivery will, in every part of a subject, be found of high importance for commanding attention, and enforcing what is spoken.

First, Let us consider emphasis ; by this, is meant a stronger and fuller sound of voice, by which we distinguish the accented syllable of some word, on which we design to lay particular stress, and to show how it affects the rest of the sentence. Sometimes the emphatic word must be distinguished by a particular tone of voice, as well as

by a stronger accent. On the right management of the emphasis depend the whole life and spirit of every discourse. If no emphasis be placed on any words, not only is discourse rendered heavy and lifeless, but the meaning left often ambiguous. If the emphasis be placed wrong, we pervert and confound the meaning wholly. To give a common instance; such a simple question as this, “Do you ride to town to-day?” is capable of no fewer than four different acceptations, according as the emphasis is differently placed on the words. If it be pronounced thus: *Do you* ride to town to-day? the answer may naturally be, No; I send my servant in my stead. If thus; *Do you ride* to town to-day? Answer, No; I intend to walk. *Do you ride to town* to-day? No; I ride out into the fields. *Do you ride to town to-day.* No? but I shall to-morrow. In like manner, in solemn discourse, the whole force and beauty of an expression often depend on the accented word; and we may present to the hearers quite different views of the same sentiment, by placing the emphasis differently. In the following words of our Saviour, observe in what different lights the thought is placed, according as the words are pronounced: “Judas, ‘betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss? *betrayest thou*—makes the reproach turn, on the infamy of treachery. *Betrayest thou*—makes it rest, upon Judas’s connection with his master. *Betrayest thou the Son of Man*—rests it, upon our Saviour’s personal character and eminence. *Betrayest*

thou the Son of Man *with a kiss*?—turns it, upon his prostituting the signal of peace and friendship, to the purpose of a mark of destruction.

In order to acquire the proper management of the emphasis, the great rule, and indeed the only rule possible to be given is, that the speaker study to attain a just conception of the force and spirit of those sentiments which he is to pronounce. For to lay the emphasis with exact propriety, is a constant exercise of good sense and attention. It is far from being an inconsiderable attainment. It is one of the greatest trials of a true and just taste; and must arise from feeling delicately ourselves, and from judging accurately, of what is fittest to strike the feelings of others. There is as great a difference between a chapter of the Bible, or any other piece of plain prose, read by one who places the several emphases everywhere with taste and judgment, and by one who neglects or mistakes them, as there is between the same tune played by the most masterly hand, or by the most bungling performer.

In all prepared discourses, it would be of great use, if they were read over or rehearsed in private, with this particular view, to search for the proper emphases before they were pronounced in public; marking at the same time, with a pen, the emphatical words in every sentence, or at least in the most weighty and affecting parts of the discourse,

and fixing them well in memory. Were this attention oftener bestowed, were this part of pronunciation studied with more exactness, and not left to the moment of delivery, as is commonly done, public speakers would find their care abundantly repaid, by the remarkable effects which it would produce upon their audience. Let me caution, at the same time, against one error, that of multiplying emphatical words too much. It is only by a prudent reserve in the use of them, that we can give them any weight. If they recur too often; if a speaker attempts to render every thing which he says of high importance, by a multitude of strong emphases, we soon learn to pay little regard to them. To crowd every sentence with emphatical words, is like crowding all the pages of a book with italic characters, which, as to the effect, is just the same with using no such distinctions at all.

Next to emphasis, the pauses in speaking demand attention. These are of two kinds; first, emphatical pauses; and next, such as mark the distinctions of sense. An emphatical pause is made, after something has been said of peculiar moment, and on which we want to fix the hearers' attention. Sometimes before such a thing is said, we usher it in with a pause of this nature. Such pauses have the same effect as a strong emphasis; and are subject to the same rules; especially to the caution just now given, of not repeating them too frequently. For as they excite uncommon

attention, and of course raise expectation, if the importance of the matter be not fully answerable to such expectation, they occasion disappointment and disgust.

But the most frequent and the principal use of pauses, is to mark the divisions of the sense, and at the same time to allow the speaker to draw his breath ; and the proper and graceful adjustment of such pauses, is one of the most nice and difficult articles in delivery. In all public speaking, the management of the breath requires a good deal of care, so as not to be obliged to divide words from one another, which have so intimate a connection, that they ought to be pronounced with the same breath, and without the least separation. Many a sentence is miserably mangled, and the force of the emphasis totally lost, by divisions being made in the wrong place. To avoid this, every one, while he is speaking, should be very careful to provide a full supply of breath for what he is to utter. It is a great mistake to imagine, that the breath must be drawn only at the end of a period, when the voice is allowed to fall. It may easily be gathered at the intervals of the period, when the voice is only suspended for a moment ; and by this management, one may have always a sufficient stock for carrying on the longest sentence, without improper interruptions.

If any one, in public speaking, shall have formed to himself a certain melody or tune, which requires

rest and pauses of its own, distinct from those of the sense, he has, undoubtedly, contracted one of the worst habits into which a public speaker can fall. It is the sense which should always rule the pauses of the voice; for wherever there is any sensible suspension of the voice, the hearer is always led to expect somewhat corresponding in the meaning. Pauses, in public discourse, must be formed upon the manner in which we utter ourselves in ordinary, sensible conversation; and not upon the stiff artificial manner which we acquire, from reading books according to the common punctuation. The general run of punctuation is very arbitrary; often capricious and false; and dictates an uniformity of tone in the pauses, which is extremely disagreeable: for we are to observe, that to render pauses graceful and expressive, they must not only be made in the right place, but also be accompanied with a proper tone of voice, by which the nature of these pauses is intimated; much more than by the length of them, which can never be exactly measured. Sometimes it is only a slight and simple suspension of voice that is proper; sometimes a degree of cadence in the voice is required; and sometimes that peculiar tone and cadence, which denote the sentence finished. In all these cases, we are to regulate ourselves, by attending to the manner in which nature teaches us to speak, when engaged in real and earnest discourse with others.

When we are reading or reciting verse, there is a peculiar difficulty in making the pauses justly.

The difficulty arises from the melody of verse, which dictates to the ear pauses or rests of its own ; and to adjust and compound these properly with the pauses of the sense, so as neither to hurt the ear, nor offend the understanding, is so very nice a matter, that it is no wonder we so seldom meet with good readers of poetry. There are two kinds of pauses that belong to the music of verse ; one is, the pause at the end of the line ; and the other, the cæsural pause in the middle of it. With regard to the pause at the end of the line ; which marks that strain or verse to be finished, rhyme renders this always sensible, and in some measure compel us to observe it in our pronunciation. In blank verse, where there is a greater liberty permitted of running the lines into one another, sometimes without any suspension in the sense, it has been made a question, whether in reading such verse with propriety, any regard at all should be paid to the close of a line ? On the stage, where the appearance of speaking in verse should always be avoided, there can, I think, be no doubt, that the close of such lines as make no pause in sense, should not be rendered perceptible to the ear. But on other occasions, this were improper : for what is the use of melody, or for what end has the poet composed in verse, if, in reading his lines, we suppress his numbers ; and degrade them, by our pronunciation, into mere prose ? We ought, therefore, certainly to read blank verse so as to make every line sensible to the ear. At the same

time, in doing so, every appearance of sing-song and tone must be carefully guarded against. The close of the line, where it makes no pause in the meaning, ought to be marked, not by such a tone as is used in finishing a sentence ; but without either letting the voice fall or elevating it, it should be marked only by such a slight suspension of sound as may distinguish the passage from one line to another without injuring the meaning.

The other kind of musical pause, is that which falls somewhere about the middle of the verse, and divides it into two hemistichs; a pause, not so great as that which belongs to the close of the line, but still sensible to an ordinary ear. This, which is called the cæsural pause, in the French heroic verse, falls uniformly in the middle of the line. In the English, it may fall after the 4th, 5th, 6th, or 7th syllables in the line and no other. Where the verse is so constructed, that this cæsural pause coincides with the slightest pause or division in the sense, the line can be read easily ; as in the two first verses of Mr Pope's *Messiah*:

Ye nymphs of Solyma ! begin the song ;
To heavenly themes, sublimer strains belong.

But if it shall happen that words, which have such a strict and intimate connection as not to bear even a momentary separation, are divided from one another by this cæsural pause, we then feel a sort of struggle between the sense and the sound, which

renders it difficult to read such lines gracefully. The rule of proper pronunciation in such cases, is to regard only the pause which the sense forms ; and to read the line accordingly. The neglect of the cæsural pause may make the line sound somewhat unharmoniously ; but the effect would be much worse, if the sense were sacrificed to the sound. For instance, in the following line of Milton :

—What in me is dark,
I lumine ; what is low, raise and support—

The sense clearly dictates the pause after “ illumine,” at the end of the third syllable, which, in reading, ought to be made accordingly ; though, if the melody only were to be regarded, “ illumine” should be connected with what follows, and the pause not made till the 4th or 6th syllable. So, in the following line of Mr Pope’s (*Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*) :

I sit, with sad civility I read—

The ear plainly points out the cæsural pause as falling after “ sad” the 4th syllable. But it would be very bad reading to make any pause there, so as to separate “ sad,” and “ civility.” The sense admits of no other pause than after the second syllable “ sit,” which therefore must be the only pause made in the reading.

I proceed to treat next of tones in pronuncia-

tion, which are different both from emphasis and pauses; consisting in the modulation of the voice, the notes or variations of sound which we employ in public speaking. How much of the propriety, the force and grace of discourse, must depend on these, will appear from this single consideration; that to almost every sentiment we utter, more especially to every strong emotion, nature hath adapted some peculiar tone of voice; insomuch, that he who should tell another that he was very angry, or much grieved, in a tone which did not suit such emotions, instead of being believed, would be laughed at. Sympathy is one of the most powerful principles by which persuasive discourse works its effect. The speaker endeavours to transfuse into his hearers his own sentiments and emotions; which he can never be successful in doing, unless he utters them in such a manner as to convince the hearers that he feels them *. The pro-

* " All that passes in the mind of man may be reduced to two classes, which I call ideas and emotions. By ideas, I mean all thoughts which rise and pass in succession in the mind. By emotions, all exertions of the mind in arranging, combining, and separating its ideas; as well as all the effects produced on the mind itself by those ideas, from the more violent agitation of the passions, to the calmer feelings produced by the operation of the intellect and the fancy. In short, thought is the object of the one, internal feeling of the other. That which serves to express the former, I call the language of ideas; and the latter, the language of emotions. Words are

per expression of tones, therefore, deserves to be attentively studied by every one who would be a successful orator.

The greatest and most material instruction which can be given for this purpose is, to form the tones of public speaking upon the tones of sensible and animated conversation. We may observe that every man, when he is much in earnest in common discourse, when he is engaged in speaking on some subject which interests him nearly, has an eloquent or persuasive tone and manner. What is the reason of our being often so frigid and unpersuasive in public discourse, but our departing from the natural tone of speaking, and delivering ourselves in an affected artificial manner. Nothing can be more absurd than to imagine, that as soon as one mounts a pulpit, or rises in a public assembly, he is instantly to lay aside the voice with which he expresses himself in private ; to assume a new, studied tone, and a cadence altogether foreign to his natural manner. This has vitiated all delivery ; this hath given rise to cant and tedious monotony, in the different kinds of modern public speaking, especially in the pulpit. Men departed from nature ; and sought to give a beauty or force,

" the signs of the one, tones of the other. Without the use of
" these two sorts of language, it is impossible to communicate
" through the ear all that passes in the mind of man."

SHERIDAN on the Art of Reading.

as they imagined to their discourse, by substituting certain studied musical tones, in the room of the genuine expressions of sentiment, which the voice carries in natural discourse. Let every public speaker guard against this error. Whether he speak in a private room or in a great assembly, let him remember that he still speaks. Follow nature; consider how she teaches you to utter any sentiment or feeling of your heart. Imagine a subject of debate started in conversation among grave and wise men, and yourself bearing a share in it. Think after what manner, with what tones and inflexions of voice, you would on such an occasion express yourself, when you were most in earnest, and sought most to be listened to. Carry these with you to the bar, to the pulpit, or to any public assembly; let these be the foundation of your manner of pronouncing there; and you will take the surest method of rendering your delivery both agreeable and persuasive.

I have said, Let these conversational tones be the *foundation* of public pronunciation; for, on some occasions, solemn public speaking requires them to be exalted beyond the strain of common discourse. In a formal studied oration, the elevation of the style, and the harmony of the sentences, prompt almost necessarily, a modulation of voice more rounded, and bordering more upon music, than conversation admits. This gives rise to what is called the declaiming manner. But though

this mode of pronunciation runs considerably beyond ordinary discourse, yet still it must have for its basis, the natural tones of grave and dignified conversation. I must observe, at the same time, that the constant indulgence of a declamatory manner is not favourable either to good composition, or good delivery ; and is in hazard of betraying public speakers into that monotony of tone, and cadence, which is so generally complained of. Whereas, he who forms the general run of his delivery upon a speaking manner, is not likely ever to become disagreeable through monotony. He will have the same natural variety in his tones, which a person has in conversation. Indeed, the perfection of delivery requires both these different manners, that of speaking with liveliness and ease, and that of declaiming with stateliness and dignity, to be possessed by one man ; and to be employed by him, according as the different parts of his discourse require either the one or the other. This is a perfection which is not attained by many ; the greatest part of public speakers allowing their delivery to be formed altogether accidentally ; according as some turn of voice appears to them most beautiful, or some artificial model has caught their fancy ; and acquiring, by this means, a habit of pronunciation, which they can never vary. But the capital direction, which ought never to be forgotten, is, to copy the proper tones for expressing every sentiment from those which nature dictates to us, in conversation with others ; to

speak always with her voice; and not to form to ourselvies a fantastic public manner, from an absurd fancy of its being more beautiful than a natural one *.

It now remains to treat of gesture, or what is called action in public discourse. Some nations animate their words in common conversation, with many more motions of the body than others do. The French and the Italians are, in this respect, much more sprightly than we. But there is no nation, hardly any person so phlegmatic, as not to accompany their words with some actions and gesticulations, on all occasions, when they are much in earnest. It is therefore unnatural in a public speaker, it is inconsistent with that earnestness and seriousness which he ought to show in all affairs of moment, to remain quite unmoved in his outward appearance, and to let the words drop from his mouth, without any expression of meaning, or warmth in his gesture.

* "Loquere," (says an author of the last century, who has written a treatise in verse, *de Gestu et Voce Oratoris*),

- "Loquere ; hoc vitium commune, loquatur I. know
- " Ut nemo ; at tensa, declamite omnia voce,
- " Tu loquere, ut mos est hominum ; boat et latrat ille,
- " Ille ululat ; rudit hic ; (fari si talia dignum est)
- " Non hominem vox ulla sonat ratione loquentem."

JOANNES LUCAS, *de Gestu et Voce*,

Lib. ii. Paris, 1675.

The fundamental rule as to propriety of action, is undoubtedly the same with what I gave as to propriety of tone. Attend to the looks and gestures, in which earnestness, indignation, compassion, or any other emotion, discovers itself to most advantage in the common intercourse of men ; and let these be your model. Some of these looks and gestures are common to all men; and there are also certain peculiarities of manner which distinguish every individual. A public speaker must take that manner which is most natural to himself. For it is here, just as in tones. It is not the business of a speaker to form to himself a certain set of motions and gestures, which he thinks most becoming and agreeable, and to practise these in public, without their having any correspondence to the manner which is natural to him in private. His gestures and motions ought all to carry that kind of expression which nature has dictated to him, and unless this be the case, it is impossible, by means of any study, to avoid their appearing stiff and forced.

However, although nature must be the groundwork, I admit that there is room in this matter for some study and art. For many persons are naturally ungraceful in the motions which they make ; and this ungracefulness might, in part at least, be reformed by application and care. The study of action in public speaking, consists chiefly in guarding against awkward and disagreeable mo-

tions, and in learning to perform such as are natural to the speaker, in the most becoming manner. For this end it has been advised by writers on this subject, to practise before a mirror, where one may see and judge of his own gestures. But I am afraid persons are not always the best judges of the gracefulness of their own motions; and one may declaim long enough before a mirror, without correcting any of his faults. The judgment of a friend, whose good taste they can trust, will be found of much greater advantage to beginners, than any mirror they can use. With regard to particular rules concerning action and gesticulation, Quintilian has delivered a great many, in the last chapter of the 11th Book of his Institutions; and all the modern writers on this subject have done little else but translate them. I am not of opinion that such rules, delivered either by the voice or on paper, can be of much use, unless persons saw them exemplified before their eyes *.

* The few following hints only I shall adventure to throw out, in case they may be of any service. When speaking in public, one should study to preserve as much dignity as possible in the whole attitude of the body. An erect posture is generally to be chosen; standing firm, so as to have the fullest and freest command of all his motions; any inclination which is used should be forwards towards the hearers, which is a natural expression of earnestness. As for the countenance, the chief rule is, that it should correspond with the nature of the discourse, and when no particular emotion is expressed, a serious and manly look is always the best. The eyes should never be fixed close on any

I shall only add further on this head, that in order to succeed well in delivery, nothing is more necessary than for a speaker to guard against a certain flutter of spirits, which is peculiarly incident to those who begin to speak in public. He must endeavour above all things to be recollect ed, and master of himself. For this end he will find nothing of more use to him than to study to become wholly engaged in his subject; to be possessed with a sense of its importance or seriousness; to be concerned much more to persuade than to please. He will generally please most, when pleasing is not his sole nor chief aim. This

one object, but move easily round the audience. In the motions made with the hands, consists the chief part of gesture in speaking. The ancients condemned all motions performed by the left hand alone; but I am not sensible that these are always offensive, though it is natural for the right hand to be more frequently employed. Warm emotions demand the motion of both hands corresponding together. But whether one gesticulates with one or with both hands, it is an important rule, that all his motions should be free and easy. Narrow and straitened movements are generally ungraceful; for which reason, motions made with the hands are directed to proceed from the shoulder rather than from the elbow. Perpendicular movements too with the hands, that is, in the straight line up and down, which Shakespeare in Hamlet, calls "sawing the air with the hand," are seldom good. Oblique motions are, in general, the most graceful. Too sudden and nimble motions should be likewise avoided. Earnestness can be fully expressed without them. Shakespeare's directions on this head are full of good sense; "use all gently," says he; "and in the very torrent and tempest of passion, acquire a tem perance that may give it smoothness."

is the only rational and proper method of raising one's self above that timid and bashful regard to an audience, which is so ready to disconcert a speaker, both as to what he is to say, and as to his manner of saying it.

I cannot conclude without an earnest admonition to guard against all affectation, which is the certain ruin of good delivery. Let your manner, whatever it is, be your own ; neither imitated from another, nor assumed upon some imaginary model, which is unnatural to you. Whatever is native, even though accompanied with several defects, yet is likely to please ; because it shows us a man ; because it has the appearance of coming from the heart. Whereas a delivery, attended with several acquired graces and beauties, if it be not easy and free, if it betray the marks of art and affectation, never fails to disgust. To attain any extremely correct and perfectly graceful delivery, is what few can expect ; so many natural talents being requisite to concur in forming it. But to attain, what as to the effect is very little inferior, a forcible and persuasive manner is, within the power of most persons ; if they will only unlearn false and corrupt habits, if they will allow themselves to follow nature, and will speak in public as they do in private, when they speak in earnest and from the heart. If one has naturally any gross defects in his voice or gestures, he begins at the wrong end, if he attempts

at reforming them only when he is to speak in public. He should begin with rectifying them in his private manner of speaking; and then carry to the public the right habit he has formed. For, when a speaker is engaged in a public discourse, he should not be then employing his attention about his manner, or thinking of his tones and his gestures. If he be so employed, study and affectation will appear. He ought to be then quite in earnest; wholly occupied with his subject and his sentiments; leaving nature, and previously formed habits, to prompt and suggest his manner of delivery.

LECTURE XXXIV.

MEANS OF IMPROVING IN ELOQUENCE.

I HAVE now treated fully of the different kinds of public speaking, of the composition, and of the delivery of a discourse. Before I finish this subject, it may be of use to suggest some things concerning the properest means of improvement in the art of public speaking, and the most necessary studies for that purpose.

To be an eloquent speaker, in the proper sense of the word, is far from being either a common or an easy attainment. Indeed, to compose a florid harangue on some popular topic, and to deliver it so as to amuse an audience, is a matter not very difficult. But though some praise be due to this, yet the idea which I have endeavoured to give of eloquence, is much higher. It is a great exertion of the human powers. It is the art of being persuasive and commanding; the art not of pleasing the fancy merely; but of speaking both to the understanding and to the heart; of interesting the hearers in such a degree, as to seize and carry them

along with us ; and to leave them with a deep and strong impression of what they have heard. How many talents, natural and acquired, must concur for carrying this to perfection ? A strong, lively, and warm imagination ; quick sensibility of heart, joined with solid judgment, good sense, and presence of mind ; all improved by great and long attention to style and composition ; and supported also by the exterior, yet important qualifications, of a graceful manner, a presence not ungainly, and a full and tuneable voice. How little reason to wonder, that a perfect and accomplished orator should be one of the characters that is most rarely to be found !

Let us not despair, however. Between mediocrity and perfection, there is a very wide interval. There are many intermediate spaces, which may be filled up with honour ; and the more rare and difficult that complete perfection is, the greater is the honour of approaching to it, though we do not fully attain it. The number of orators who stand in the highest class is, perhaps, smaller than the number of poets who are foremost in poetic fame ; but the study of oratory has this advantage above that of poetry, that, in poetry, one must be an eminently good performer, or he is not supportable :

—Mediocribus esse Poëtis
Non homines, non Di, non concessere columnæ*.

* For God and man, and letter'd post denies,

That Poets ever are of middling size.

FRANCIS.

In eloquence this does not hold. There, one may possess a moderate station with dignity. Eloquence admits of a great many different forms; plain and simple, as well as high and pathetic; and a genius that cannot reach the latter, may shine with much reputation and usefulness in the former.

Whether nature or art contribute most to form an orator, is a trifling inquiry. In all attainments whatever, nature must be the prime agent. She must bestow the original talents. She must sow the seeds, but culture is requisite for bringing these seeds to perfection. Nature must always have done somewhat; but a great deal will always be left to be done by art. This is certain, that study and discipline are more necessary for the improvement of natural genius, ~~inatory~~, than they are in poetry. What I mean, is, that though poetry be capable of receiving assistance from critical art, yet a poet, without any aid from art, by the force of genius alone, can rise higher than a public speaker can do, who has never given attention to the rules of style, composition, and delivery. Homer formed himself; Demosthenes and Cicero were formed by the help of much labour, and of many assistances derived from the labour of others. After these preliminary observations, let us proceed to the main design of this Lecture; to treat of the means to be used for improvement in eloquence.

In the first place, what stands highest in the order of means, is personal character and disposition.¹ In order to be a truly eloquent or persuasive speaker, nothing is more necessary than to be a virtuous man.² This was a favourite position among the ancient rhetoricians : “ Non posse orare
“ torem esse nisi virum bonum.” To find any such connection between virtue and one of the highest liberal arts, must give pleasure; and it can, I think, be clearly shewn, that this is not a mere topic of declamation, but that the connection here alleged, is undoubtedly founded in truth and reason.³

For, consider first, Whether any thing contributes more to persuasion, than the opinion which we entertain of the probity, disinterestedness, candour, and other good moral qualities of the person who endeavours to persuade? These give weight and force to every thing which he utters; nay, they add a beauty to it; they dispose us to listen with attention and pleasure; and create a secret partiality in favour of that side which he espouses. Whereas, if we entertain a suspicion of craft and disingenuity, of a corrupt, or a base mind, in the speaker, his eloquence loses all its real effect. It may entertain and amuse; but it is viewed as artifice, as trick, as the play only of speech; and, viewed in this light, whom can it persuade? We even read a book with more pleasure, when we think favourably of its author; but when we have the living speaker before our eyes, addressing us

personally on some subject of importance, the opinion we entertain of his character must have a much more powerful effect.

But, lest it should be said, that this relates only to the character of virtue, which one may maintain without being at bottom a truly worthy man, I must observe farther, that besides the weight which it adds to character, real virtue operates also in other ways, to the advantage of eloquence.

First, nothing is so favourable as virtue to the prosecution of honourable studies. It prompts a generous emulation to excel ; it inures to industry ; it leaves the mind vacant and free, master of itself, disengaged from those bad passions, and disengaged from those mean pursuits which have ever been found the greatest enemies to true proficiency. Quintilian has touched this consideration very properly : “ Quod si agrorum nimia cura, et sollicitior rei familiaris diligentia, et venandi voluptas, et dati spectaculis dies, multum studiis auferunt, quid putamus facturas cupiditatem, avaritiam, invidiam ? Nihil enim est tam occupatum, tam multiforme, tot ac tam variis affectibus conci- sum, atque laceratum, quam mala ac improba mens. Quis inter hæc, literis, aut nulli bonæ arti, locus ? Non hercle magis quam frugibus, in terra sentibus ac rubis occupata * ? ”

* “ If the management of an estate, if anxious attention to domestic economy, a passion for hunting, or whole days given

But, besides this consideration, there is another of still higher importance, though I am not sure of its being attended to as much as it deserves; namely, that from the fountain of real and genuine virtue, are drawn those sentiments which will ever be most powerful in affecting the hearts of others. Bad as the world is, nothing has so great and universal a command over the minds of men as virtue. No kind of language is so generally understood, and so powerfully felt, as the native language of worthy and virtuous feelings. He only, therefore, who possesses these full and strong, can speak properly, and in its own language, to the heart. On all great subjects and occasions, there is a dignity, there is an energy in noble sentiments, which is overcoming and irresistible. They give an ardour and a flame to one's discourse, which seldom fails to kindle a like flame in those who hear; and which more than any other cause, bestows on eloquence that power, for which it is famed, of seizing and transporting an audience. Here, art and imitation will not avail. An assumed character

~~and dissipation and the many trivial amusements~~

"up to public places of amusements, consume so much time that
 "is due to study, how much greater waste must be occasioned
 "by licentious desires, avarice, or envy? Nothing is so much
 "hurried and agitated, so contradictory to itself, or so violently
 "torn and shattered by conflicting passions, as a bad heart.
 "Amidst the distractions which it produces, what room is left for
 "the cultivation of letters, or the pursuit of any honourable art?
 "No more, assuredly, than there is for the growth of corn in a
 "field that is overrun with thorns and brambles."

conveys nothing of this powerful warmth. It is only a native and unaffected glow of feeling, which can transmit the emotion to others. Hence, the most renowned orators, such as Cicero and Demosthenes, were no less distinguished for some of the high virtues, as public spirit and zeal for their country, than for eloquence. Beyond doubt, to these virtues their eloquence owed much of its effect; and those orations of theirs, in which there breathes most of the virtuous and magnanimous spirit, are those which have most attracted the admiration of ages.

Nothing, therefore, is more necessary for those who would excel in any of the higher kinds of oratory, than to cultivate habits of the several virtues, and to refine and improve all their moral feelings. Whenever these become dead, or callous, they may be assured, that, on every great occasion, they will speak with less power, and less success. The sentiments and dispositions, particularly requisite for them to cultivate, are the following: The love of justice and order, an indignation at insolence and oppression; the love of honesty and truth, and detestation of fraud, meanness, and corruption; magnanimity of spirit; the love of liberty, of their country and the public; zeal for all great and noble designs, and reverence for all worthy and heroic characters. A cold and sceptical turn of mind is extremely adverse to eloquence: and no less so, is that cavilling disposition which takes pleasure

in depreciating what is great, and ridiculing what is generally admired. Such a disposition bespeaks one not very likely to excel in any thing; but least of all in oratory. A true orator should be a person of generous sentiments, of warm feelings, and of a mind turned towards the admiration of all those great and high objects, which mankind are naturally formed to admire. Joined with the manly virtues, he should, at the same time, possess strong and tender sensibility to all the injuries, distresses, and sorrows of his fellow-creatures; a heart that can easily relent; that can readily enter into the circumstances of others, and can make their case his own. A proper mixture of courage, and of modesty, must also be studied by every public speaker. Modesty is essential; it is always, and justly, supposed to be a concomitant of merit; and every appearance of it is winning and prepossessing. But modesty ought not to run into excessive timidity. Every public speaker should be able to rest somewhat on himself; and to assume that air, not of self-complacency, but of firmness, which bespeaks a consciousness of his being thoroughly persuaded of the truth, or justice, of what he delivers, a circumstance of no small consequence for making impression on those who hear.

Next to moral qualifications, what, in the second place, is most necessary to an orator, is a fund of knowledge. Much is this inculcated by Cicero and Quintilian: "Quod omnibus disci-

“plinis et artibus debet esse instructus orator.” By which they mean, that he ought to have, what we call, a liberal education ; and to be formed by a regular study of philosophy, and the polite arts. We must never forget that,

Scribendi recte, sapere est et principium et fons.

Good sense and knowledge are the foundation of all good speaking. There is no art that can teach one to be eloquent, in any sphere, without a sufficient acquaintance with what belongs to that sphere ; or if there were an art that made such pretensions, it would be mere quackery, like the pretensions of the sophists of old, to teach their disciples to speak for and against every subject ; and would be deservedly exploded by all wise men. Attention to style, to composition, and all the arts of speech, can only assist an orator in setting off, to advantage, the stock of materials which he possesses ; but the stock, the materials themselves, must be brought from other quarters than from rhetoric. He who is to plead at the bar, must make himself thoroughly master of the knowledge of the law ; of all the learning and experience that can be useful in his profession, for supporting a cause, or convincing a judge. He who is to speak from the pulpit, must apply himself closely to the study of divinity, of practical religion, of morals, of human nature ; that he may be rich in all the topics, both of instruction and of persuasion.

He who would fit himself for being a member of the supreme council of the nation, or of any public assembly, must be thoroughly acquainted with the business that belongs to such assembly ; he must study the forms of court, the course of procedure ; and must attend minutely to all the facts that may be the subject of question or deliberation.

Besides the knowledge that properly belongs to his profession, a public speaker, if ever he expects to be eminent, must make himself acquainted, as far as his necessary occupations allow, with the general circle of polite literature. The study of poetry may be useful to him, on many occasions, for embellishing his style, for suggesting lively images, or agreeable allusions. The study of history may be still more useful to him ; as the knowledge of facts, of eminent characters, and of the course of human affairs, finds place on many occasions *. There are few great occasions of public speaking, in which one may not derive assistance from cultivated taste, and extensive knowledge, they will often yield him materials for proper ornament ; sometimes, for argument and real

* “ Imprimus verò abundare debet orator exemplorum copia, cum veterum, tum etiam novorum ; adeo ut non modo quæ conscripta sunt historiis, aut sermonibus velut per manus tradita, quæque quotidie aguntur, debeat nosse ; verùm ne ea quidem quæ a clarioribus poëtis sunt facta negligere.”

use. A deficiency of knowledge, even in subjects that belong not directly to his own profession, will expose him to many disadvantages, and give better qualified rivals a great superiority over him.

Allow me to recommend, in the third place, not only the attainment of useful knowledge, but a habit of application and industry. Without this, it is impossible to excel in any thing. We must not imagine, that it is by a sort of mushroom growth, that one can rise to be a distinguished pleader, or preacher, or speaker, in any assembly. It is not by starts of application ; or by a few years preparation of study afterwards discontinued, that eminence can be attained. No ; it can be attained only by means of regular industry, grown up into a habit, and ready to be exerted on every occasion that calls for industry. This is the fixed law of our nature, and he must have a very high opinion of his own genius indeed, that can believe himself an exception to it. A very wise law of our nature it is ; for industry is, in truth, the great “ Condimentum,” the seasoning of every pleasure ; without which life is doomed to languish. Nothing is so great an enemy both to honourable attainments, and to the real, to the brisk, and spirited enjoyment of life, as that relaxed state of mind which arises from indolence and dissipation. One that is destined to excel in any art, especially in the arts of speaking and writing, will be known by this more than by any other mark whatever,

an enthusiasm for that art ; an enthusiasm, which, firing his mind with the object he has in view, will dispose him to relish every labour which the means require. It was this that characterised the great men of antiquity; it is this, which must distinguish the moderns who would tread in their steps. This honourable enthusiasm, it is highly necessary for such as are studying oratory to cultivate. If youth wants it, manhood will flag miserably.

In the fourth place, attention to the best models will contribute greatly towards improvement. Every one who speaks or writes, should, indeed, endeavour to have somewhat that is his own, that is peculiar to himself, and that characterises his composition and style. Slavish imitation depresses genius, or rather betrays the want of it. But withal, there is no genius so original, but may be profited and assisted by the aid of proper examples, in style, composition, and delivery. They always open some new ideas ; they serve to enlarge and correct our own. They quicken the current of thought, and excite emulation.

Much, indeed, will depend upon the right choice of models which we purpose to imitate ; and supposing them rightly chosen, a farther care is requisite, of not being seduced by a blind universal admiration. For, “ decipit exemplar, vitiis imitabile.” Even in the most finished models we can select, it must not be forgotten, that there

are always some things improper for imitation. We should study to acquire a just conception of the peculiar characteristic beauties of any writer, or public speaker, and imitate these only. One ought never to attach himself too closely to any single model; for he who does so, is almost sure of being seduced into a faulty and affected imitation. His business should be, to draw from several the proper ideas of perfection. Living examples of public speaking, in any kind, it will not be expected that I should here point out. As to the writers, ancient and modern, from whom benefit may be derived in forming composition and style, I have spoken so much of them in former Lectures, that it is needless to repeat what I have said of their virtues and defects. I own it is to be regretted, that the English language, in which there is much good writing, furnishes us, however, with but very few recorded examples of eloquent public speaking. Among the French there are more. Saurin, Bourdaloue, Flechier, Massillon, particularly the last, are eminent for the eloquence of the pulpit. But the most nervous and sublime of all their orators is Bossuet, the famous bishop of Meaux; in whose *Oraisons Funebres*, there is a very high spirit of oratory*. Some of Fontenelle's harangues to the French Academy, are elegant and agreeable. And at the bar, the printed plead-

* The criticism which M. Crevier, author of *Rhetorique Françoise*, passes upon these writers whom I have above named, is,

ings of Cochin and D'Aguesseau, are highly extolled by the late French critics.

There is one observation, which it is of importance to make, concerning imitation of the style of any favourite author, when we would carry his style into public speaking. We must attend to a very material distinction between written and spoken language. These are, in truth, two different manners of communicating ideas. A book that is to be read, requires one sort of style; a man that is to speak, must use another. In books, we look for correctness, precision, all redundancies pruned, all repetitions avoided, language completely polished. Speaking admits a more easy copious style, and less fettered by rule; repetitions may often be necessary, parentheses may sometimes be graceful; the same thought must often be placed in different views; as the hearers can catch it only from the mouth of the speaker, and have not the advantage, as in reading a book, of turning back again, and of dwelling on what they do not fully comprehend.

“ Bossuet est grande, mais inégal ; Flechier est plus égal, mais “ moins élevé, et souvent trop fleuri : Bourdaloue est solide et “ judicieux, mais il néglige les grâces légères : Massillon est plus “ riche en images, mais moins fort en raisonnement. Je sou- “ haite donc, que l'orateur ne se contente dans l'imitation d'un “ seul de ces modèles, mais qu'il tache de réunir en lui toutes “ leurs différentes vertus.” Vol. II. chap. dernière.

Hence the style of many good authors would appear stiff, affected, and even obscure, if, by too close an imitation, we should transfer it to a popular oration. How awkward, for example, would Lord Shaftesbury's sentences sound in the mouth of a public speaker? Some kinds of public discourse, it is true, such as that of the pulpit, where more exact preparation and more studied style are admitted, would bear such a manner better than others which are expected to approach more to extemporaneous speaking. But still there is, in general, so much difference between speaking, and composition designed only to be read, as should guard us against a close and injudicious imitation.

Some authors there are, whose manner of writing approaches nearer to the style of speaking, than others; and who, therefore, can be imitated with more safety. In this class, among the English authors, are Dean Swift and Lord Bolingbroke. The Dean, throughout all his writings, in the midst of much correctness, maintains the easy, natural manner of an unaffected speaker; and this is one of his chief excellencies. Lord Bolingbroke's style is more splendid, and more declamatory than Dean Swift's; but still it is the style of one who speaks, or rather who harangues. Indeed, all his political writings (for it is to them only, and not to his philosophical ones, that this observation can be applied) carry much more the

appearance of one in declaiming with warmth in a great assembly, than of one writing in a closet, in order to be read by others. They have all the copiousness, the fervour, the inculcating method that is allowable and graceful in an orator; perhaps too much of it for a writer; and it is to be regretted, as I have formerly observed, that the matter contained in them should have been so trivial, or so false: for, from the manner and style, considerable advantage might be reaped.

In the fifth place, Besides attention to the best models, frequent exercise, both in composing and speaking, will be admitted to be a necessary mean of improvement. That sort of composition is, doubtless, most useful, which relates to the profession or kind of public speaking, to which persons addict themselves. This they should keep ever in their eye, and be gradually inuring themselves to it. But let me also advise them, not to allow themselves in negligent composition of any kind. He who has it for his aim to write, or to speak correctly, should, in the most trivial kind of composition, in writing a letter, nay even in common discourse, study to acquit himself with propriety. I do not at all mean, that he is never to write or to speak a word, but in elaborate and artificial language. This would form him to a stiffness and affectation, worse, by ten thousand degrees, than the greatest negligence. But it is to be observed, that there is, in every thing, a

manner which is becoming, and has propriety; and opposite to it, there is a clumsy and faulty performance of the same thing. The becoming manner is very often the most light, and seemingly careless manner; but it requires taste and attention to seize the just idea of it. That idea, when acquired, we should keep in our eye, and form upon it whatever we write or say.

Exercises of speaking have always been recommended to students, in order that they may prepare themselves for speaking in public, and on real business. The meetings, or societies, into which they sometimes form themselves for this purpose, are laudable institutions; and, under proper conduct, may serve many valuable purposes. They are favourable to knowledge and study, by giving occasion to inquiries concerning those subjects which are made the ground of discussion. They produce emulation; and gradually inure those who are concerned in them, to somewhat that resembles a public assembly. They accustom them to know their own powers, and to acquire a command of themselves in speaking; and what is, perhaps, the greatest advantage, of all, they give them a facility and fluency of expression, and assist them in procuring that "Copia verborum," which can be acquired by no other means but frequent exercise in speaking.

But the meetings which I have now in my

eye, are to be understood of those academical associations, where a moderate number of young gentlemen, who are carrying on their studies, and are connected by some affinity in the future pursuits which they have in view, assemble privately, in order to improve one another, and to prepare themselves for those public exhibitions which may afterwards fall to their lot. As for those public and promiscuous societies, in which multitudes are brought together, who are often of low stations and occupations, who are joined by no common bond of union, except an absurd rage for public speaking, and have no other object in view, but to make a show of their supposed talents, they are institutions not merely of an useless, but of an hurtful nature. They are in great hazard of proving seminaries of licentiousness, petulance, faction, and folly. They mislead those, who, in their own callings, might be useful members of society, into fantastic plans of making a figure on subjects which divert their attention from their proper business, and are widely remote from their sphere in life.

Even the allowable meetings into which students of oratory form themselves, stand in need of direction in order to render them useful. If their subjects of discourse be improperly chosen; if they maintain extravagant or indecent topics; if they indulge themselves in loose and flimsy declamation, which has no foundation in good sense;

or accustom themselves to speak pertly on all subjects without due preparation, they may improve one another in petulance, but in no other thing; and will infallibly form themselves to a very faulty and vicious taste in speaking. I would, therefore, advise all who are members of such societies, in the first place, to attend to the choice of their subjects; that they be useful and manly, either formed on the course of their studies, or on something that has relation to morals and taste, to action and life. In the second place, I would advise them to be temperate in the practice of speaking; not to speak too often, nor on subjects where they are ignorant or unripe; but only when they have proper materials for a discourse, and have digested and thought of the subject beforehand. In the third place, When they do speak, they should study always to keep good sense and persuasion in view, rather than an ostentation of eloquence, and for this end, I would, in the fourth place, repeat the advice which I gave in a former Lecture, that they should always choose that side of the question to which, in their own judgment, they are most inclined, as the right and the true side; and defend it by such arguments as seem to them most solid. By these means they will take the best method of forming themselves gradually to a manly, correct, and persuasive manner of speaking.

It now only remains to inquire, of what use

may the study of critical and rhetorical writers be for improving one in the practice of eloquence? These are certainly not to be neglected; and yet I dare not say that much is to be expected from them. For professed writers on public speaking, we must look chiefly among the ancients. In modern times, for reasons which were before given, popular eloquence, as an art, has never been very much the object of study; it has not the same powerful effects among us that it had in more democratical states; and therefore has not been cultivated with the same care. Among the moderns, though there has been a great deal of good criticism on the different kinds of writing, yet much has not been attempted on the subject of eloquence or public discourse; and what has been given us of that kind has been drawn mostly from the ancients. Such a writer as Joannes Gerardus Vossius, who has gathered into one heap of ponderous lumber, all the trifling, as well as the useful things, that are to be found in the Greek and Roman writers, is enough to disgust one with the study of eloquence. Among the French, there has been more attempted on this subject, than among the English. The bishop of Cambray's writings on eloquence I before mentioned with honour, Rollin, Batteux, Crevier, Gibert, and several other French critics, have also written on oratory; but though some of them may be useful, none of them are so considerable as to deserve particular recommendation.

It is to the original ancient writers that we must chiefly have recourse; and it is a reproach to any one, whose profession calls him to speak in public, to be unacquainted with them. In all the ancient rhetorical writers, there is, indeed, this defect, that they are too systematical, as I formerly showed; they aim at doing too much; at reducing rhetoric to a complete and perfect art, which may even supply invention with materials on every subject; insomuch, that one would imagine they expected to form an orator by rule, in as mechanical a manner as one would form a carpenter. Whereas, all that can, in truth, be done, is to give openings for assisting and enlightening taste, and for pointing out to genius the course it ought to hold.

Aristotle laid the foundation for all that was afterwards written on the subject. That amazing and comprehensive genius, which does honour to human nature, and which gave light into so many different sciences, has investigated the principles of rhetoric with great penetration. Aristotle appears to have been the first who took rhetoric out of the hands of the sophists, and introduced reasoning and good sense into the art. Some of the profoundest things which have been written on the passions and manners of men, are to be found in his Treatise on Rhetoric; though in this, as in all his writings, his great brevity often renders him obscure. Succeeding Greek rhetoricians, most

of whom are now lost, improved on the foundation which Aristotle had laid. Two of them still remain, Demetrius Phalerius, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus; both write on the construction of sentences, and deserve to be perused; especially Dionysius, who is a very accurate and judicious critic.

I need scarcely recommend the rhetorical writings of Cicero. Whatever, on the subject of eloquence, comes from so great an orator, must be worthy of attention. His most considerable work on this subject is that *De Oratore*, in three books. None of Cicero's writings are more highly finished than this treatise. The dialogue is polite; the characters are well supported, and the conduct of the whole is beautiful and agreeable. It is, indeed, full of digressions, and his rules and observations may be thought sometimes too vague and general. Useful things, however, may be learned from it; and it is no small benefit to be made acquainted with Cicero's own idea of eloquence. The "Orator ad M. Brutum," is also a considerable treatise; and, in general, throughout all Cicero's rhetorical works there run those high and sublime ideas of eloquence, which are fitted both for forming a just taste, and for creating that enthusiasm for the art, which is of the greatest consequence for excelling in it.

But of all the ancient writers on the subject of oratory, the most instructive, and most useful, is

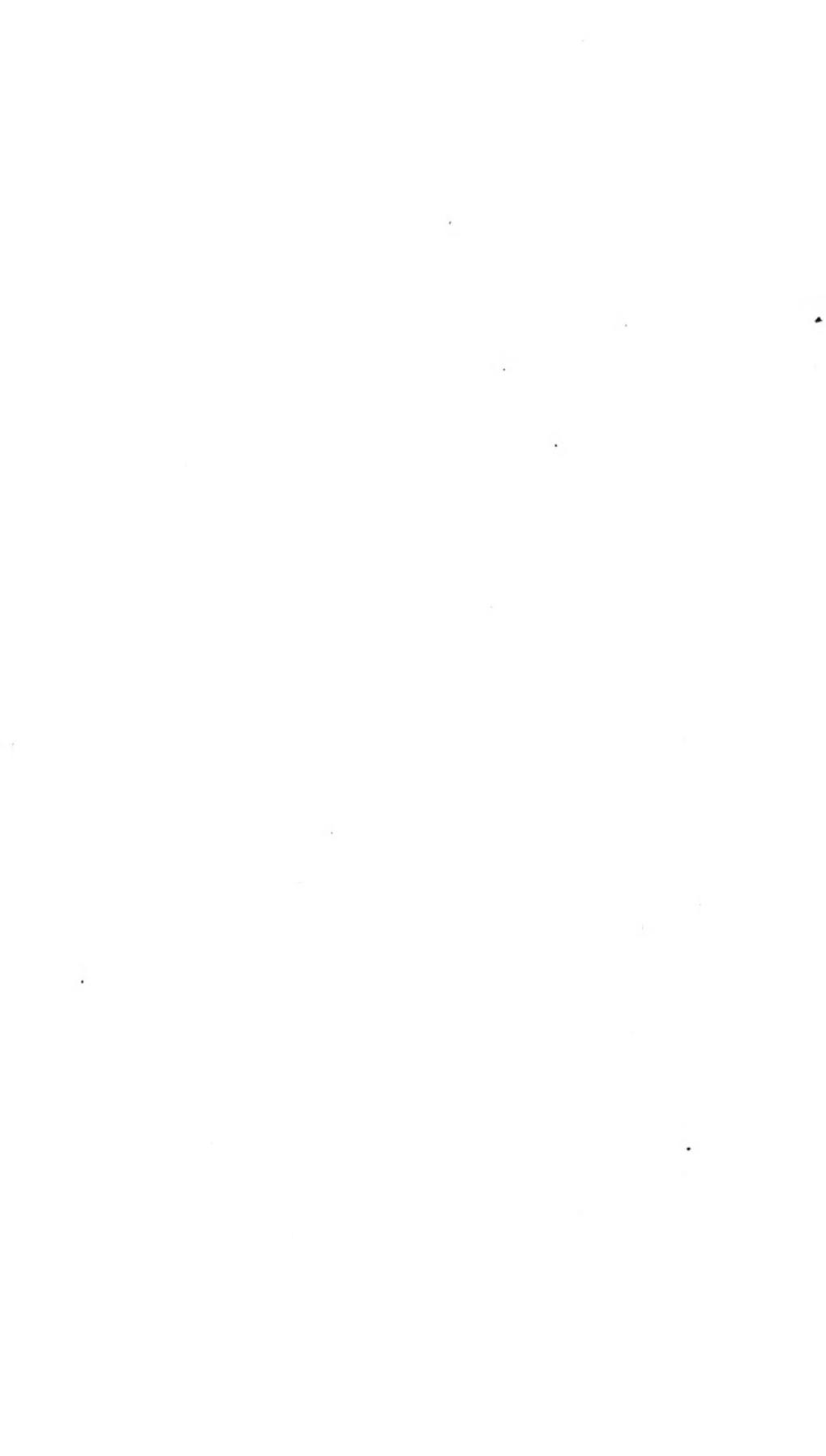
Quinctilian. I know few books which abound more with good sense, and discover a greater degree of just and accurate taste, than Quinctilian's Institutions. Almost all the principles of good criticism are to be found in them. He has digested into excellent order all the ancient ideas concerning rhetoric, and is, at the same time, himself an eloquent writer. Though some parts of his work contain too much of the technical and artificial system then in vogue, and for that reason may be thought dry and tedious, yet I would not advise the omitting to read any part of his Institutions. To pleaders at the bar, even these technical parts may prove of some use. Seldom has any person, of more sound and distinct judgment than Quinctilian, applied himself to the study of the art of oratory.

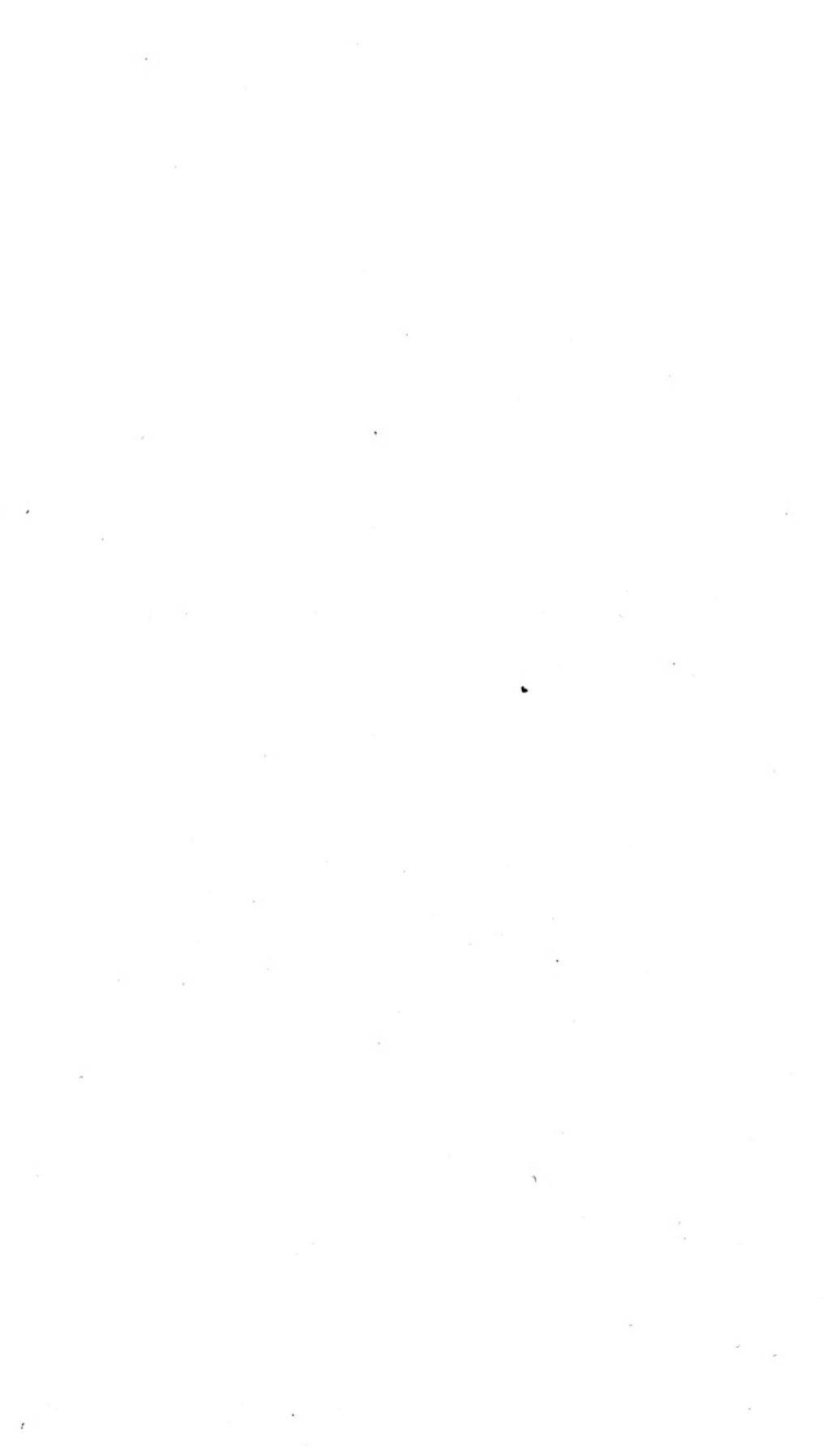
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